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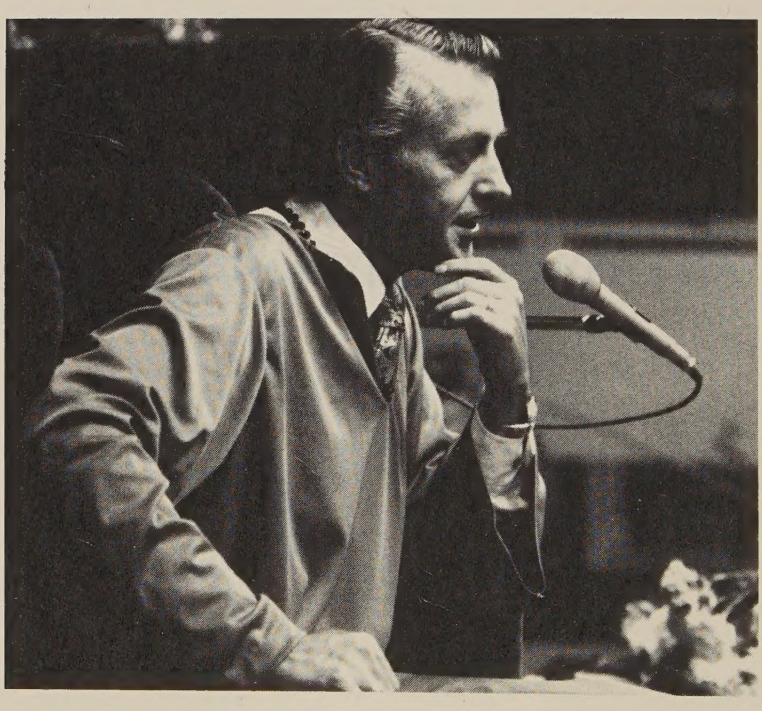

An EASY GUIDE To MEDITATION

Roy Eugene Davis

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you who read these
pages and practice
meditation.
May
you commune with God
and experience the
fulfillment of
destiny.

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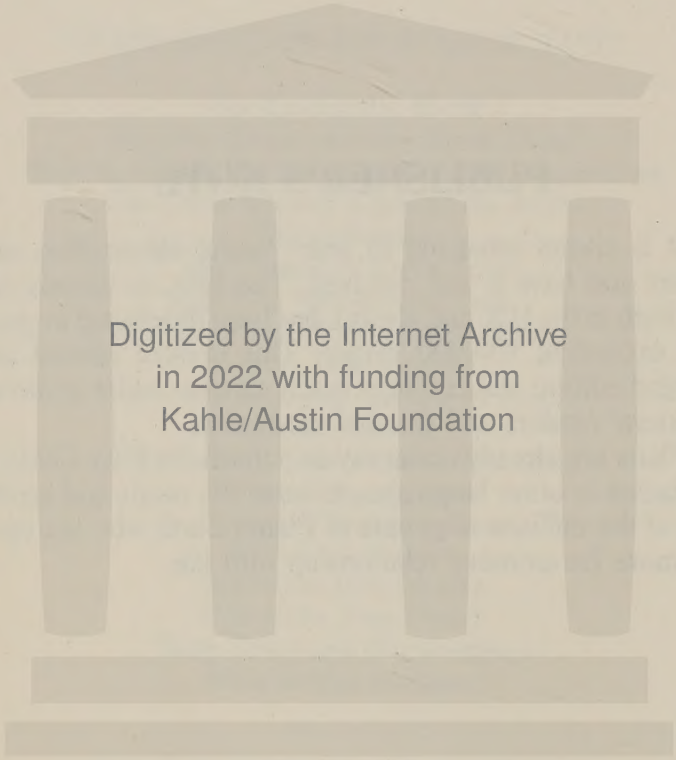
PUBLISHER'S NOTE

It is always satisfying to share useful information with readers and have it well received. This title, in various editions both in the U.S. and abroad, has been distributed in quantities exceeding 100,000 copies. This present revised and enlarged edition will certainly reach an even wider audience of general readers and devoted meditators.

Plans are already underway to publish *An Easy Guide to Meditation* in other languages, to serve the needs and aspirations of the millions of people of Planet Earth who are open to a more harmonious relationship with life.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Roy Eugene Davis began his spiritual training in 1950 after meeting his guru, Paramahansa Yogananda, in Los Angeles, California. Mr. Davis is the spiritual director of Center for Spiritual Awareness, the author of many books which have been published in several languages, and a world-traveled speaker and teacher.

Programs have been offered in major U.S. cities, Canada, Japan, Brazil, England, European cities and West Africa. Regular meditation seminars and retreats are offered at Center for Spiritual Awareness world headquarters, located at Lakemont, Georgia, in a quiet setting amidst the wooded mountains of northeast Georgia.

FOREWORD

As I travel the world to speak and offer seminars, I meet thousands of men and women who share a common ideal, that of experiencing inner transformation and awakening to a more expansive understanding of their role in the cosmos. Among the variety of themes offered, meditation practice evokes the greatest response. This is natural, because of our common need to more fully actualize inborn capacities. When communicating heart to heart, and spirit to spirit, no religious or cultural barriers are present.

This book has been purposely kept simple in presentation. What is true about the life process is easily understood once we mature sufficiently to view our world without error, and living in harmony with the rhythms of nature is spontaneous once inner conflicts have been resolved.

In the emerging New Era, there have been an increasing number of books offered to the reading public which deal with meditation and its various aspects. Almost all of them have served well to educate people about possible benefits and to encourage them in the direction of personal practice and experience.

An Easy Guide to Meditation includes in its pages everything one needs in order to become a proficient meditator. All that is required is adherence to the procedure as presented

and regular, surrendered practice. From my personal experience spanning almost four decades as a meditator, and from the testimonies of many whom I know who meditate with benefit, it can be affirmed that in this approach to wellness and self-discovery results are assured—if one will follow through in a disciplined and dedicated manner.

I wish every reader success in practice, and the highest and best of all the good life has provided, for the acknowledging and acceptance. What is available to one, is available to all. The evidence of this will be known through practice.

ROY EUGENE DAVIS

Lakemont, Georgia
November 20, 1987

I salute the supreme teacher, the Truth,
whose nature is bliss, who is the giver
of the highest happiness, who is pure
wisdom, who is beyond all qualities and
infinite like the sky, who is beyond words,
who is one and eternal, pure and still,
who is beyond all change and phenomena
and who is the silent witness to all our
thoughts and emotions—I salute Truth,
the supreme teacher.

—*Ancient Vedic Hymn*

INSTRUCTION

An Easy Guide to Meditation

In which the burden of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened: —that serene and blessed mood
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In Body, and become a living soul.
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of Harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

— *William Wordsworth (1770-1850)*

ONE

Meditation and the Positive Benefits

In today's fast awakening world, during which the inhabitants of Planet Earth are increasingly challenged to come to terms with circumstances and to be more self-responsible for their lives, it is natural that hundreds of thousands of people are turning to meditation as a way to inner peace and to learn to actualize their innate potential. Examining current trends, it is a fair assumption that in the years ahead many millions more will be practicing meditation.

Men, women, and children in all walks of life are today meditating. There must be some value in such practice—and there is—for we do not continue a procedure unless we derive useful results.

If you are a new meditator you will be able to meditate correctly, and with benefit, after reading the first few chapters of this book. If you are already meditating on a regular schedule you will find your experience deepened and enriched. If you are an advanced meditator you will be encouraged to explore an almost unlimited range of consciousness and to experience greatly enhanced abilities.

I want to make it clear from the beginning that meditation as here taught has nothing to do with self-hypnosis, autoconditioning procedures, or methods used for reprogramming the mind.

Meditation is a process which enables one to experience deep, conscious relaxation, emotional calm, and the clear state of awareness known as superconsciousness. This clear state of awareness is as different from the ordinary waking state as the ordinary waking state is from sleep. Superconsciousness is the natural state when awareness is not involved with thought processes, emotions and sensory perceptions.

During ordinary sleep we are either unconscious, because awareness is removed from thought processes and sensory perceptions, or we dream, because mental activity and emotions are stimulated. During the ordinary waking state we are often influenced by urges and tendencies which have roots in the unconscious, or we are perceiving our world through a screen of conditioned attitudes and beliefs.

When resting in superconsciousness, the peak experience during meditation, we experience clear awareness only. It is during this phase of meditation that fine influences pervade the mental field and influence the nervous system and body organs in constructive ways. Also, from this superconscious state we can objectively examine our thoughts, our feelings and our world with true discernment, seeing more clearly what is so about whatever is then examined. Because of error-free perception we can then be completely honest with ourselves and completely honest in our relationships—with thoughts, feelings, people, environmental circumstances and the world at large.

Meditation, then, is not practiced as an escape from pressing problems or the challenge of responsibilities. On the contrary, regular meditation experience enables us to function more creatively and more successfully, so that whatever our purposes in life may be, we can fulfill them more easily and correctly.

The Positive Benefits of Regular Meditation Practice

The benefits of meditation practice have been long extolled by practioners, but only recently have volunteer meditators been carefully studied under controlled circumstances. The evidence is now coming in and we have an accumulation of evidence that something unique occurs during the meditative experience. I will describe here but a few of the conclusions drawn by researchers who have monitored the meditation response and published their findings.

1. *Deep, Conscious Relaxation*—By observing changes in brain wave patterns and other physiological conditions, we now know that it is possible, through meditation, to experience conscious relaxation which is more complete than that experienced during the ordinary sleep state. One can experience complete rest while remaining "awake," that is, while being totally conscious.

2. *Stress Reduction*—Because of deep relaxation, slowing of breathing pattern and activity of internal organs, emotions become settled and mental activity becomes refined. An examination of blood samples of meditators reveals a reduction of blood lactate levels, indicating a lessening of stress in the body. The harmful effects of hypertension have been widely reported, not the least of which can be elevated blood pressure, migraine headaches, and interference with normal functioning of glands and organs. Many meditators with a history of high blood pressure have been able to reduce blood pressure to a safe level by meditating on a regular schedule for the relaxation benefits alone.

3. *Improved Concentration*—Easy flowing of attention

to the purpose at hand is concentration. During meditation our attention is naturally drawn inward, without interferences from unwanted thoughts or emotional surges. After meditation we find it easier to concentrate upon projects and relationships and, in this way, we can be more productive and functional. Also, the conscious exercise of concentration during waking hours enables us to meditate more effectively.

4. *More Orderly Thinking*—When superconscious forces prevail during meditation, thought streams are ordered automatically. The chaos of conflicting thought streams, supported by emotions, ceases. After meditation, because of the relaxed awareness one experiences, thought processes tend to be harmoniously arranged and the interaction between left and right hemispheres of the brain is more balanced.

5. *Strengthening of the Immune System*—Stress, confusion, despair, anxiety, fear, loneliness—these contribute to weakening of the immune system, the body's defense against disease and deterioration. Conscious relaxation and superconscious experience, on the other hand, are conducive to strengthening the immune system. After meditation, the cultivation of optimism, hope, faith, and feelings of love, also exercises a healthy and nourishing influence on the immune system.

6. *Slowing of the Aging Process*—Examination of meditators indicates that persons who meditate on a regular schedule do not show signs of aging as fast as nonmeditators. Mental and emotional states are better, evidence of stress is minimal, and the immune system is healthier.

7. *Improvement in the Quality of Life*—To merely exist in space and time, or to cope with a seeming never-ending

series of challenges, is not the real purpose of living. Because of general improvements in mental, emotional and physical health, and an improvement in feelings of self-value, meditators tend to enjoy life more, to have more wholesome and supportive relationships, and to have purpose and direction in their lives.

8. *Increase in Intelligence*—Our ability to discern, to draw correct conclusions and to perceive without error, is an indication of intelligence. When thoughts and feelings are confused, when self-defeating attitudes are maintained, our ability to exercise native intelligence is diminished. Superconscious influences experienced during and after meditation tend to increase awareness and harmonize thoughts and emotions. Self-defeating attitudes tend to be dissolved. The result is that most meditators experience an increase in intellectual abilities.

9. *Awakened Intuition*—Intuition is our innate ability to know by knowing. It is the ability to perceive directly what is so about what is examined. When we experience a flash of insight, when we experience inner knowing, this is intuition. Through the use of intelligence and intuition it is possible to discern the inner side of nature, to subjectively experience reality at a finer and deeper level than is possible through sense perception alone.

10. *More Self-Sufficiency and Freedom of Choice*—As a result of being able to rest in the silence during meditation, and to experience "self-completeness," one discovers that he is no longer as dependent upon externals as he perhaps once was. The meditator, then, experiences himself as a self-sufficient and self-reliant person and is therefore better able to make wise choices about how he will live his life and what he will

do with his time, energies and talents. Many people, as the result of regular meditation, have been able to make very important choices, such as the choice to experience healing and live a productive life, rather than to play the role of victim and be defeated by illness or other circumstances.

11. *Pronounced Creativity*—A healthy human being is, by nature, a problem-solver and a goal-achiever. With the removal of inner restricting patterns and conditions, meditators discover a pronounced increase in creative abilities. They are able to flow with the rhythms of life more easily and accomplish useful purposes with relative ease.

12. *Increase in Spiritual Awareness*—As a result of correct meditation practice the meditator is able to experience his real nature as pure consciousness; he is not dependent upon mental activity, feelings, or relationships to add to his beingness. He comes to easily accept the fact that he is a unit of awareness and is able to more clearly understand the inner teachings of philosophers and seers. If he is religious, the meditator will find that his appreciation for spiritual instruction increases and his understanding rapidly improves. A more pronounced sense of unity-consciousness, harmony with the universe, naturally unfolds.

13. *Freedom from Addictions of All Kinds*—The addictive personality has emotional needs which he attempts to satisfy by using substances, behavior, or relationships which are often harmful and destructive. Even if such substances, behavior or relationships are not a health challenge, they still result in a diminishment of creativity, and they prevent a person from exploring a wider range of possibilities in life. The symptoms of addiction may vary—overeating, undereating, un-

wise use of alcohol or drugs, the maintenance of non-useful relationships, self-defeating behavior of many kinds, and so on. The real problem is never "out there," and it is well for a person with an addictive personality disorder to realize that he is not a victim. Every person has freedom of choice. After meditating deeply on a regular schedule many people find that they are able to choose wise behavior and renounce unwise behavior, without painful withdrawal symptoms or involvement in expensive and time-consuming programs. And, if one chooses to enroll in a special program for the purpose of education and emotional support, his progress will be much faster if he meditates correctly and is willing to assume responsibility for his choices.

Who Should Meditate, and Why?

Every healthy-minded person should meditate. There are many approaches to practice, and the final results are the same if one follows through correctly.

Many people experience spontaneous meditation and may not even be aware of the process. When we are still, and temporarily "take leave of our senses" while experiencing inward clarity and calm, we are experiencing a kind of meditative state. When we enjoy being alone and inwardly still, we are in a meditative mood. Such episodes are refreshing because they afford us the opportunity to withdraw from environmental and internal stimuli and experience peace. At such times we often feel renewed, strengthened, more clear-headed and better able to continue with our duties and relationships. At such times, too, we often experience insights into pressing problems, answers to questions we have been pondering, and innovative breakthroughs in work or artistic projects.

Observation of meditators, and their personal testimonies,

indicate that meditators often function better in many ways. Children's study habits improve, grades improve, and they get along better with adults and peers after meditating for a few weeks. Athletes perform better, salespersons do better, executives function better—in short, whatever a person's life style or occupation might be, improvement is noted.

To be fair, we must say that some meditators do not perform exceptionally well in matters relating to general life style and profession, but this can usually be traced to the fact that they lack purpose in their lives. It is essential, therefore, if one is to expect benefits on all levels to have a sense of purpose. We shall deal with this matter later in the book.

Meditation is not recommended for persons who are severely neurotic or who have been diagnosed as psychotic. These people should become involved with a useful therapy program designed to assist them in the direction of normal function. They can often benefit from self-image therapies and can be encouraged to become responsible and useful members of the community. However, until they become responsible, meditation may only allow them more opportunity to indulge in fantasy and withdrawal behavior.

Meditation has been found useful, in many instances, for persons who are physically ill and who desire to be restored to wellness. Because of the intimate relationship between states of consciousness, mental and emotional states, and body functions, when one meditates correctly the body's healing systems are encouraged to become influential—especially if one will visualize health, function and the possibility of creative expression. Ample literature is available to support the fact that many of the common ailments experienced by people, and even many of the more serious ones, can be avoided—and even eliminated—if the person involved will take responsibility for his life and learn helpful procedures.

Do not be afraid to meditate. It is an easy and beneficial process. You do not have to believe without experience. Merely experiment by entering into a routine of daily meditation for a period of several weeks, and then compare how you feel and how you function to how you felt and functioned before becoming involved with the process. The proof will be in your own improved outlook on life and your improvement in health and function.

Let the practitioner of Yoga constantly concentrate his attention on the Supreme Reality, remaining in solitude and alone, self-controlled, free from desires and longings for possessions or sense experience. Having the body positioned in a firm posture, let him make his mind one-pointed; controlling thoughts and senses, let him practice pure concentration in order to attain inward purity. Holding the body, head and neck erect and still, flowing his attention to the spiritual eye (between the eyebrows), without allowing his eyes to wander, serene and fearless, firm in his vow of self-control, subdued in mind, let him sit harmonized, his attention flowing to the Transcendental Field which is the Single Reality. The devoted person of controlled mind, ever remaining harmonized, attains to peace, the supreme realization.

— Bhagavad Gita 6:10-15

TWO

How To Practice Meditation

If you are a new meditator follow instructions closely and practice after you have read this chapter. In this way you will more easily understand what is shared in the remainder of this book.

Select a Time and a Quiet Place for Meditation

Within the framework of your daily schedule select a suitable time for daily practice. This may be early in the morning, before becoming involved in your daily rounds, in the evening when it is convenient, or both morning and evening. Allow at least thirty minutes for the session.

Early morning is a good time because your thoughts will not yet have become involved with other matters. Evening is also good because then the events of the day will have transpired. Too, meditation at this time will help to reduce any stress which might have accumulated during the day. Twice-a-day practice is recommended, if possible. Once a day, for sure.

Because you will want to experience deep relaxation, it is best not to meditate after eating, as the digestive process will preclude complete calming of the body.

Select a quiet place where you will not be disturbed for any reason. You will want to give your total attention to the

process. This could be the bedroom, or any room where you can be alone.

Just as regular sleeping, eating and working habits are conducive to function, so regular meditation routines are conducive to success in meditation practice.

How to Practice

Loosen any tight articles of clothing so you will be able to fully relax. Sit upright in a comfortable chair, poised and balanced, with head erect. The ideal meditation posture is one in which the meditator can sit for the duration of the session without having to unnecessarily move the body.

Close your eyes and be still for a few moments. Inhale and exhale a few times, rather deeply, but do not overdo it. Let the breathing pattern then become regulated, making no effort to control it.

Your inner gaze can be directed to the space between the eyebrows, as though looking through that space into the distance. Select a point in distant *inner space* and gaze at it, without strain. Steady gazing contributes to single-pointed concentration.

Enter into the process easily and naturally, without any effort and without any anxiety for quick results.

With inbreathing feel the air flow in through the nostrils, breathing from the diaphragm, which is the natural, relaxed way to breath. When the air flows out, feel that you are dissolving in space. Do not visualize yourself dissolving, just *feel* yourself dissolving. Let the ego sense and the personality dissolve, while inwardly remaining aware. Now you are the participant as well as the observer of the process.

You need not look at your watch while meditating. If you decide to meditate for twenty or twenty-five minutes, when the time has elapsed you will come out of meditation.

While meditating, if your attention wanders gently bring it back to the process. Be patient with yourself and allow yourself time to train your attention. If thoughts intrude, be disinterested, that is, do not struggle to suppress them. Just return to your practice. Non-effort is the key to success. Gentle attention is all that is required. In time you will attain proficiency. Have no doubt about this.

When you conclude the session remain seated for a few minutes, feeling content, relaxed and serene. Let the meditative calm pervade your mind and body. Feel that you are inwardly content, in harmony with your world and in your right place in the drama of life. Feel that nature is supportive of you and that you are on friendly terms with the forces of nature and with all living things.

Now, return your attention to your environment and attend to your duties, consciously and with purpose.

Use of a Chosen Word or Phrase

If you feel the need to use a more specific technique to assist concentration and deepen your involvement, use a word or a phrase of your choice, synchronized with the breathing pattern.

The word or phrase should be "easy on the mind" and comfortable to use. If you are religious, even devotional, use the word *God*. Whether you be Christian, Moslem, Hindu, Buddhist, or of another faith, choose a sacred word and use it.

Sitting the same way as in the earlier described process, with inbreathing go with the flow, and with outbreathing, when it occurs, let the word of your choice *float* in your mind. By this I mean "listen" to the word in your mind, instead of mentally affirming it. This attractive inner mental sound will fascinate your attention and keep you more easily focused.

Eventually, as you become more internalized, conscious listening to the word will give way to the experience of clear awareness and deep peace. Should you drop out of the state of clear awareness just resume listening to the word, letting it *float* in the mind every time you exhale, until the clear state is again experienced.

This is the *mantra* meditation process. In Sanskrit *man* means "mind" or "thinking principle," and *tra* means "to take beyond." (The syllable *man* is pronounced with the "a" sound as in "drawn.") A mantra is a sound introduced into the meditation process to attract attention and lead it from mental involvement. There is no mystery involved. When attention is attracted to pleasant sounds during meditation, mental processes are ignored. When mental processes are ignored, thought streams tend to become dormant.

A chosen phrase can also be used as a mantra. For instance, with inbreathing *listen* to "God is my life." With outbreathing, *listen* to "God lives through me." Or, again synchronized with inbreathing and outbreathing, "I am a bubble....in the ocean of Spirit." Or, "I am open....to infinite good." Whatever phrase feels right can be used.

Remember, the use of a phrase in this manner during meditation is not an attempt to condition the mind. The phrase merely serves as an attractive focus for our attention so that we can continue to flow more deeply into the silence, in the direction of the field of pure awareness.

If you want to use a Sanskrit mantra, use *Hong-Sau* (saw), with the first syllable floating in the mind with inbreathing and the second syllable floating in the mind with outbreathing. Or you can use *So-Ham* (hum) in the same manner.

As you experience progressive relaxation, flow more deeply into the spiritual eye (the space between the eyebrows) and allow yourself to be drawn into the superconscious levels.

Guidelines to Make Your Practice Successful

The upright seated posture is recommended for meditation because this body position is conducive to alertness. It is perfectly all right to sit in a comfortable cross-legged posture if this is desired. Lying down is not recommended for meditation because we are accustomed to sleeping in this position, and beginning meditators are likely to drift into sleep when they reach a certain level of relaxation if they lie down to meditate.

You may experience a tendency to go to sleep even in the upright position if you are not rested when you meditate, or if you fail to keep your attention flowing upward and inward. Also, some people who have experienced hypnosis may be inclined to fall into a sleep state when meditating. This can be avoided by keeping attention involved with the process.

Other obstacles to concentration may be: the tendency to be involved with memories; the tendency to think about present or future circumstances; or unnecessary body movement. Be resolved to sit quietly while attending to the purpose of meditation and all obstacles will soon be overcome.

This process is suitable for anyone, for persons who are devotedly religious and for persons who presently have no religious inclinations. Meditation can be practiced by people of all cultures because the spirit-mind-body relationship is common to us all. These procedures will prove useful and effective for you regardless of your background, nationality or life style.

If possible, before going on to the next chapter, practice meditation using the suggestions given.

YOUR PERSONAL MEDITATION SCHEDULE

Decide now on a daily schedule which best suits your personal needs. Resolve to meditate correctly and surrender to the process. If you are a new meditator schedule at least 30 minutes once or twice a day. If you are more advanced, schedule a program suitable for your needs and aspirations. Get up earlier in the morning if you have to, and enjoy that quiet time alone with the Presence.

Time:

Procedure or Technique(s):

More than once when I
Sat all alone, revolving in myself
The word that is the symbol of myself,
The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,
And passed into the nameless, as a cloud
Melts into heaven. I touch'd my limbs, the limbs
Were strange, not mine—and yet no shade of doubt,
But utter clearness, and thro' loss of Self
The gain of such large life as matched with ours
Were sun to spark—unshadowable in words,
Themselves but shadows of a shadow-world.

— Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

THREE

What Happens When We Meditate

Let us be reminded that we are, at the center of our being, already bright and perfect. Meditation is our opportunity to arrange an ideal environment in which the mental field can become clear and our innate perfection can be experienced.

There are stages through which we move as we settle into meditation, and it is well to be informed of these stages so that we understand them and can pass through them.

If you use the "watching the breathing" method and remain aware of yourself "in the moment," you will notice that the body becomes relaxed, emotions settle, and the mental field becomes increasingly clear—while you remain the conscious observer of whatever transpires. You are observing changes but you are not involved with them.

If you use mantra, or a chosen phrase, you will experience gradual withdrawal from awareness of your environment and from feelings and thoughts. You will soon no longer be aware of surroundings and only partially aware of your body and body functions. This affords you the opportunity to fully explore internal states.

Then, you will be meditating without effort. It will be a natural and easy process, and very enjoyable. You will be in-

wardly comfortable and settled, because the urge to experience through the senses has been neutralized and you are at peace within yourself. It is this inner sense of self-satisfaction which enables a meditator to later be in charge of his life and to make wise decisions about his life style and behavior. Compulsive behavior and counter-productive habits can be resisted and easily dissolved as a result.

During settled meditation concentration is steady and effortless. Attention flows easily to the inner word or chosen phrase, and beyond to the field of clear awareness. At this stage meditation flows under the direction of the innate intelligence.

As the meditation continues to flow, attention moves through levels of mind. Thought streams become more subtle, and then refined, until they cease. The "peak experience," the awareness of pure, unmodified consciousness, then occurs.

After resting in this state of awareness for a duration, for however long it occurs or feels comfortable, our attention then flows back to mental processes, feelings, and body awareness. The complete process is: inward flowing, absorption, clear awareness, and outward flowing.

Using the Mind's Natural Tendencies with Benefit

Our mind, which is a portion of Universal Mind, is a creative tool we use for the purpose of relating to, and functioning in, the world. One of the tendencies of the mind is to flow to experiences which provide us with a degree of pleasure and satisfaction. When we are hungry and eat food, we feel an inner sense of contentment. When we set and achieve goals, we experience inner satisfaction. When we enjoy supportive relationships with others, we experience satisfaction. When we do anything which results in our feeling more secure, more complete, more transcendent, we experience satisfaction.

By being too outwardly directed, too dependent upon external matters for our happiness and satisfaction we can, if we are not discerning, become addicted to pleasure-causing experiences. We may eat too much food, or too much of non-nourishing foods. We may be obsessed with achievement. We may become dependent upon non-useful relationships. We may unwisely use drugs or other substances which provide us with artificial and health-destroying "happiness."

However, when we introduce the mind to the refined, superior, more permanent, and life-enchancing pleasures resulting from deep meditation, the mind naturally tends to prefer it. In this way we can more easily give up our attachments and our addictions. Also, in this way the subconscious resistance to meditation practice is overcome.

We are often so used to being involved with sense experience, and with our own feelings and thoughts, that we may have difficulty, in the early stages of meditation practice, in removing ourselves from them. For instance, when we turn within to meditate we may find ourselves preoccupied with emotional feelings, with thinking, or with our memories. This is why we use a chosen technique as a focus for attention. The technique should be attractive and easy to use so that attention more easily flows to it, and away from distracting feelings and thought streams.

Rather than think in terms of overcoming distracting influences, be enthusiastically involved with meditation and surrender everything to that.

Also, because of our long experience with relating to mental processes we may find, during meditation, that we tend to become involved with fantasy, with mental pictures, or with flights of fancy. Again, ignore such inclinations and flow attention inward, being attentive to the meditation technique until you are free from such mental phenomena.

Handling Other Possible Occurrences

Some new meditators experience mild body movement when they begin to relax during their practice. If this is merely the body's way of becoming more comfortable, let it occur. If movement continues, breathe in rather deeply and exhale with a sigh, to induce complete relaxation. Be resolved to sit motionless while meditating so that all forces can flow inward.

It is not uncommon for meditators to report a feeling of mild pressure between the eyebrows or at the crown of the head. If one is relaxed, and not straining to concentrate, the pressure should subside with practice. Be sure not to strain when looking within. Let the process be gentle.

Should you experience occasional energy surges in the spinal pathway, just relax and let the process continue. It will cease once attention is internalized.

Some meditators report mild mood swings during the day, after they have been meditating for a while. This is merely evidence of inner adjustment and should be no cause for alarm. Often, the reduction of stress, along with intentional involvement with a new life style, will result in mild confusion until new patterns are established.

New meditators who meditate for longer periods than the prescribed once or twice a day sessions, may experience episodes of mild confusion and even emotional unrest due to the release of heretofore suppressed emotions and unpleasant memories. One of the results of meditation is that the entire range of human consciousness is lighted up so that transformation and clearing can occur. Even more advanced meditators often experience such episodes from time to time. This should not be cause for concern. It is only that material in the unconscious is being released, so it can be handled. Just main-

tain an attitude of calm self-sufficiency and remember that you are neither your feelings—nor your thoughts; you are a unit of pure consciousness, and you can remain unmoved by change when it occurs.

Purification and Transformation of Mind, Nervous System and Body

When superconscious influences are invited into the mental field during meditation, they resist destructive drives and tendencies and eventually dissolve them. In this way the mental field is cleansed. The nervous system is actually refined and restructured by these superior influences. We relate to our world through the mind, nervous system and physical body, and the more refined these are, the easier it is for consciousness to express.

Our entire physiology is gradually transformed as a result of meditation and wise choices in thinking, feeling and behavior. Even if one is not totally committed to the ideal of enlightenment, complete understanding of the nature of consciousness-as-the-world, if one will meditate and live a well-ordered life there will be a steady and obvious change in mental function, attitudes and feelings, and the body itself. More and more, as time unfolds, increasing evidence of superconscious influences will manifest, resulting in enhanced human experience and a healthier society.

Because time is a factor in the transformation process it is necessary that we be patient and allow inner changes to occur naturally. While we are all the same at the center of our being, not all begin the conscious path to total awareness with the same psychological and physical conditions. Some will unfold more easily and quickly than others because they are endowed with good health and a natural or acquired aptitude

for adjusting to needed changes. Do not compare your progress, or seeming lack of it, with that of others. Live your own life and experience your own good according to life's involvement with you. In this way you will continue steadily in the direction of the highest and best of which you are capable.

Earnestness is the path of immortality, thoughtlessness (purposelessness) is the path of death. Those who are in earnest do not die; those who are thoughtless (without purpose) are as if dead already. . .Wise people, meditative, steady, always possessed of strong powers, attain to Nirvana (pure consciousness), the highest happiness.

— *Dhamma-pada (Buddhism)*

I applaud your devotion to philosophy: I rejoice to hear that your soul has set sail, like the returning Ulysses, for its native land—that glorious, that only true country—the world of unseen truth.

— *Letter of Plotinus to Flaccus (3rd century)*

FOUR

Experiencing Life as It is Meant to Be

Living is meant to be enjoyable and satisfying. If this is so, why do not more people enjoy life and why do not more people experience true satisfaction?

The answer is simple: many do not know any better than to struggle, cope with challenge, and experience pain and heartache, and many who know better have not been motivated to do better.

Education is needed by persons who do not know how to live correctly. Inspiration to action is needed by persons who are already informed but who are self-bound by inertia or confusion. I say "self-bound" because when we know what to do and yet refuse to make changes for the better, we have chosen our condition of limitation. And while it is helpful to have the encouragement of others, the most important constructive influence is our own determination to put our affairs in order and engage in responsible practices which can make a decided difference.

Basic Things to Know About

The universe is "friendly." It is supportive. It is self-renewing. When we learn to harmonize with nature's laws we, too, will experience support and renewal. The natural inclina-

tion of life is in the direction of unfoldment, growth and completion. Because we are involved with the rhythms of nature our inclination is also in the direction of unfoldment, growth and completion.

So think of the world as your friend, and be a friend to your world. Your thoughts, feelings and actions contribute to the totality of the collective consciousness of the planet. The consciousness of the total human population merges and blends to make up what is called planetary consciousness. Think about this, and think about what kind of contribution you are making to the collective consciousness of your world.

As conscious human beings we are responsible for ourselves—for our wellness, for our relationships, and for the wellness of Planet Earth. We cannot escape this responsibility; we assumed it when we were born and it will be ours until we depart from this world. Accept your responsibility and do your best from now forward.

Cultivate the virtues. Be honest, truthful, kind and fair in your relationships with others. Make wise use of your time and energy. Renounce attachments and addictions and be a caring and responsible steward of the things of the world. You own nothing because life has provided you with everything. Your responsibility is to come to terms with the world and leave it a better place when your sojourn here is over.

Many sincere people who are intent upon true understanding have yet to come to terms with this world. Either they become overly attached to it or they have an aversion to relating to it. Both attitudes are incorrect. The ideal way to live in the world is to be comfortable in it without being unduly influenced by it.

Learn to live free in an open universe, fulfilling your purposes without restrictions of any kind. It can be done, because others are doing it and if they are, you can, too.

Examine the nature of life. Read what knowledgeable persons have written concerning their discoveries, ponder what they have written, and arrive at your own realizations. Ask within yourself, "Why were the worlds formed, and how?" Ask, "What is the true nature of God?" Ask, "What is my real nature and why was I born into this world?" You were not born into the world merely to satisfy a few desires, to see to your personal security, and then to retire from useful work and die. There is a higher, more noble purpose for your being here.

You have come to learn, to grow, and to make a useful contribution to the evolutionary process. That is why you have come here. If this is not clear to you, study and contemplate until it is, then be about your appointed rounds—learning more, growing more, and serving more. This is the way to experience life as it is meant to be lived.

Conduct your life so that everything you do is constructive. Whatever contributes to higher thinking, healthier feelings, better relationships, and a more harmonious social and world condition, do these things. Whatever contributes to destructive thinking, emotional conflict, impaired relationships, and disharmony in society, renounce these things.

Eat nourishing foods, schedule time for recreation and rest, open your mind and consciousness to all good. Live the kind of life you know to be ideal, even if others you know do not. You will be doing the right things and you will set an example for others to emulate.

Here are four guidelines to remember, and to abide by: *be self-disciplined, doing what you know you should do, always; study the nature of consciousness and how the life process works; meditate on a regular schedule; let your ego sense dissolve in order to experience oneness with God and the cosmos.* These form the core of every esoteric teaching known to man.

Practical Things to do After Meditation

The quiet interlude after meditation is the ideal time to engage in inner creative work. During this phase of your practice you are calm, objective, mentally clear and intuitively awake. Do the following, from time to time and whenever inclined:

1. *Love and Bless All People*—Think of the people of the world, invite them into your consciousness, and feel love for them. In this way bless yourself and bless others. Be thankful for the opportunity to do this.

2. *Write a List of Worthy Projects*—If you need direction in life, or if you have direction but need to clearly establish your priorities, write a list of your worthy projects. Include, if you like, your hopes and dreams, for yourself and for others. When you do this, feel that you are in partnership with the Intelligence of the universe, because you are. Never mind the petty things; just write a list of the things of which you are worthy, and which are in line with the highest and best you can envision. Afterwards, do what you can do to be a creative participant in actualizing your goals and projects. If you do not know what to do, live with faith and let the universe unfold matters in divine order. It will.

3. *Visualize Conclusions*—No matter what your goals might be, use this process. If you want to experience an increase in spiritual awareness, improved mental abilities, a more balanced emotional nature, better relationships, success in ventures—this process is equally effective. Just mentally picture yourself as being fulfilled, in any and all ways. Picture yourself thus, and *feel* it to be so. Do not think of future-time

possibilities; feel yourself to *now* be the person you want to be, in consciousness, in understanding, in relationships, and in harmony with the world. Rest in this feeling of completion and carry it within you after you conclude your practice session. In this way be "transformed by the renewing of your mind."

4. *If You Need Healing, Do This*—Sometimes the body is in need of healing. Or it may be that healing of another kind is needed. Perhaps mental peace is needed, or emotional calm, or harmonious relationships. All that really needs to be healed is our consciousness, in relationship to circumstances. Sit in the meditative calm and visualize health of body, mental order, emotional calm, supportive relationships, and harmony with the forces of nature. Visualize clearly and *feel* the reality of what you are visualizing. Carry this inner knowing and feeling within you after you conclude your practice session. If you need professional assistance, then seek out the best help possible and do all you can to be restored to wellness.

Use the forms on the next two pages to enter into a relationship with life.

SELF-ACTUALIZATION PLANS

Write clearly your constructive plans and follow through with correct involvement. Remember as you do this that you are in partnership with the Power that nourishes the universe.

First, write your goals relative to the following areas of your life. List your goals first. Then write what you will do to actualize them. If there are any present restrictions that you know of, write them and what you will do to remove them. (You may want to use these pages as a guide and write in a notebook for privacy.)

1. Spiritual Awareness

2. Mental Awareness and function

3. Emotional Harmony and Peace of Mind

4. Physical Health and Vitality

5. Supportive and Cooperative Relationships

Write a List of Your Hopes and Dreams, for Yourself, Others and Your World

After meditation, or whenever quiet and relaxed, let your awareness expand and write your hopes and dreams, your personal goals, anything you can *see* yourself doing in the weeks, months and years before you. Include others in your possibility-thinking session.

After you have done this, put the list away and refer to it from time to time. Do what you can to implement projects, leaving yourself open to unplanned good, knowing that the universe is moving to assist you in the direction of total fulfillment. Live a natural, God-attuned life and cultivate faith.

"Which of you, by worrying, can add one cubit to his stature?

"So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;

"And yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

"Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will* He not much more *clothe* you? O you of little faith?

"Therefore, do not worry, saying 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

—*The Gospel According to Saint Matthew 6:27-31, 32*

FIVE

Answers to Often-Asked Questions

Let us now, together, examine matters of interest which relate to meditation practice and to living in a gracious and natural way in today's world. It is my hope that the following information will assist in clearing your doubts, provide useful information, and inspire you in the direction of personal fulfillment.

Explain more about the history and tradition of meditation, and why are there so many varied procedures taught?

Meditation has probably been experienced on the planet since early human beings became self-conscious. Self-consciousness, the sense of being an individual in relationship to the cosmos, naturally leads to questioning life's purpose, self-examination, introspection and contemplation.

We know that meditation has been practiced and taught for many thousands of years. Ancient texts have been translated from Sanskrit, and other languages, in which meditation procedures and subtle states of consciousness are explained. Many of these sources are "Eastern" because civilization matured in the East prior to the unfoldment of Western civilization. But meditation should not be considered an Eastern practice and, therefore, incompatible with Western psychology and temperament. It is merely a process which any person can prac-

tice with benefit because the spirit-mind-body relationship is common to people of all cultures.

The major world scriptures provide accounts of how prophets and seers frequently sought interludes of solitude for the purpose of prayer and spiritual communion. Surrendered prayer and inspired communion result in spontaneous meditation and an opening of ordinary consciousness to the boundless reality of the field of pure consciousness.

In the West meditation has been taught for well over one hundred years, by Christian contemplatives and by persons influenced by Yoga and other disciplines. A few teachers from India, including Swami Vivekananda, taught widely in America and Europe around the turn of the century. Paramahansa Yogananda, my guru and with whom I studied, made America his home in 1920 and for the next three decades lectured to the public and taught personal disciples. It is estimated that he taught over 100,000 persons to meditate during his active ministry.

In the sixth and seventh decades of this century other teachers came from far lands to teach meditation, and many competent teachers with origins in the West also taught successfully. The trend continues today on a global scale. I have taught large classes in major U.S. cities, Canada, Japan, Brazil, Europe and West Africa, and the response is always positive.

The reason for varied procedures being offered is that teachers tend to share what they have found effective in their own practice. Also, people often have individual needs and differing temperaments, and to meet needs and to be effective in helping others in the direction of maturity, specialized procedures and techniques have evolved. Regardless of the preliminary approach to meditation practice, the end result is the same.

What is the difference, if any, between prayer, meditation, and contemplation?

Meditation, as taught in this book, is the process of directing attention inward, in order to experience transcendence. *Prayer* involves a relationship with Deity and is, of course, useful. If one feels inclined to pray, as part of the meditation schedule, the best times to pray are: at the beginning, to experience an opening of consciousness; then, after meditation, to be established in the awareness of the presence of God. Also, this is an excellent time to pray on behalf of others. *Contemplation* is inward examination of a theme, a question for which one desires an answer, or a problem for which one desires to know the solution. Such gentle pondering, or contemplating, with the intention of experiencing insight, results in revelation. Contemplation is experienced during the meditation process, after one is settled in concentration upon the chosen ideal until the peak experience occurs. Upon experiencing superconsciousness there is no longer any awareness of ourselves as contemplating. There is only the experience of conscious being.

What does it mean to be enlightened? And how long does it take to become enlightened?

To be enlightened about something is to be possessed of true understanding about it. To be enlightened in the spiritual sense is to clearly know the nature of consciousness, from the unmanifest field to full expression as the cosmic process. It is not only possible to be enlightened, it is extremely desirable, and the major purpose for our being in this world.

At the inmost center we are already pure, bright, and knowledgeable, because we are units of consciousness, rays of the one Essence. But until we are consciously enlightened this purity, brightness and knowledge is obscured because of

our identification with restricting characteristics in the mind (habits, tendencies, beliefs, rigid attitudes, conditionings) and physiology (nervous system and body).

We can take a two-fold approach to the solving of the basic problem of temporary unknowingness. We can yearn to know the truth about life and meditate deeply to experience superconsciousness. As a result fine influences pervade mind, nervous system and body to cleanse and enliven it. We can also consciously work to rid ourselves of all restricting characteristics by involving ourselves in a program of behavior modification.

In this way destructive characteristics are dissolved and constructive characteristics become dominant. Eventually, the soul's innate capacities unfold and we flow with the force of evolution, naturally doing the right thing at the right time with unerring guidance.

Some days I don't feel like meditating. What should I do then?

If you have agreed within yourself to meditate on a regular schedule, you should do so no matter how you feel about it. Do not feel that you will come to find meditation distasteful. No, what will happen is that you will dissolve the habit of resisting your good and flow into the silence with joy. You will feel better about yourself for having mastered your subconscious resistance. Your confidence will increase and enable you to master other situations in your life.

I am afraid of death. Will meditation help me overcome this fear?

Yes, meditation is a conscious way to "die daily" to the sense-perceived world. We do this, unconsciously, every time we sleep. When we are tired, and require a retreat from circumstances, we turn inward to sleep. We are then better able

to contine living. Therefore, we do not fear sleep. Through meditation we experience conscious self (soul) fulfillment and require nothing in the way of sensory or mental support to add to our reality. Meditation is one of the best ways to prepare for eventual transition and should be taught to every person who will soon face that experience. So long as we have purpose in this world we can continue to live here, with greater understanding and freedom from dependency, because of experiencing regular episodes of deep meditation.

Is it useful to meditate with others? Can individual and group meditations improve world conditions?

It is certainly useful for compatible people to meditate together from time to time. Group participation can strengthen our personal resolve, reinforce new meditators in their practice, and contribute to the general wellness of community and planetary consciousness. The ideal way for such a gathering to proceed is to quietly come together at an appointed time, meditate for an hour or longer, then disband and carry the meditative consciousness into the community. This is not the time for superficial philosophical discussion or shallow social interaction.

The more open we are to superconscious influences, the more they flow through us and radiate into the environment. While there is no harm in our feeling that group practice is beneficial to planetary consciousness, we should remember that it is through our own transformed lives that the most effective impact is made upon the world. As we become more free from inner restrictions, the collective consciousness of mankind also benefits.

I am the only member in my family unit who is currently interested in meditation. Any special suggestions?

Meditate at a time when your practice will not attract undue attention and when others in the family are not inconvenienced. Increased harmony, love and mutual support will be the natural result of your personal practice and the sharing of your goodness with the family.

How do I respond to friends and associates who do not share my interests in the spiritual life and who ask me questions or make remarks?

If your friends and associates do not share your interests in these matters they should not even know of your involvement. Interested persons can, of course, be taught to meditate or given helpful literature. Others should be related to in a friendly, appropriate manner and conversation directed to matters of mutual concern. To allow others to invade our privacy is to profane that which is sacred and precious. Also, too much talking, even with interested persons, about these matters drains vital force and weakens our personal resolve on the path. Talk less, meditate more, and live righteously all the time.

Is it all right to listen to music when I meditate? Can I meditate while performing routine tasks?

Preliminary mood music is helpful to some people. It can contribute to relaxation and a calm mental state. Often, however, it takes the "edge" off our concentration, so that we tend to drift into a reverie state instead of remaining intent upon inner processes. Meditate, if possible, in absolute silence. In this way avoid possible distractions and sensory input which might contribute to mood changes and mental activity.

One can walk, or do almost anything, in a meditative mood,

but one cannot give full attention to the inner process if other matters are involving attention and the senses. Being relaxed and aware at all times is recommended. When you meditate, do so correctly and with purpose. Do not fool yourself into thinking that walking about in a meditative mood is the same as superconscious meditation as taught and recommended here. Many people do everything except meditate correctly and then try to convince themselves that they have meditated.

Should I meditate in a darkened room? And, should I always meditate in the same room?

For indepth meditation practice it is useful to sit in a darkened room. The body will relax more easily and there will be less chance of distractions caused by light filtering through the closed eyelids. There is a psychological value, too: when we turn the lights low we are performing an act which states: "I am sincere about what I am doing and I am giving it my total attention."

There can be value in meditating in the same room each time you sit to practice. Do not become dependent upon a certain place, because whenever you close your eyes you begin to withdraw from the world. If you do have a regular place where you sit to meditate, memories of previous meditation successes will surface in your mind as you begin your practice and this will assist you. Also, the meditation environment may become charged with superconscious forces as the result of repeated meditation sessions. In this way the sanctified environment will be even more supportive.

Uncontrolled thoughts and feelings are not my problem. My problem is that when I sit for a while, I lose track of what is happening and, later, come to myself and realize that I was in a blank state, not uncon-

scious, yet not conscious. How can I solve this problem?

Try giving a little more attention to the spiritual eye, and feeling yourself meditating *from* the crown chakra. This will help keep attention out of the subconscious and unconscious levels of the mental field. Also, be more involved with your mantra, or with whatever technique you find useful. Decide ahead of time that meditation will be a clear, conscious experience.

Is it sufficient to merely meditate once or twice a day, and then live an ordinary life? Is that all there is to it?

That's all there is to it—for persons interested only in the relaxation benefits and gradual enlivening of the nervous system and body. Gradual results will be noted over a period of time. If one did no other intentional thing for his own wellness, meditation in this manner would be useful.

For more pronounced results, besides meditation do other useful things. Read educational books for information and inspiration. Learn more about the world in which you live. Study the nature of Consciousness, the nature of the soul, how the mind works, and cultivate the virtues. Live an ideal life as perfectly as you can. Find out what your major purpose in life is, and devote yourself to it.

Maintain a regular exercise schedule, be increasingly open to the benevolence of nature. Eat natural foods and experience the relationship between food choices and the quality of your consciousness. Be more cosmic conscious. Give yourself to service. You will then discover that all your needs are provided for and that an endless flow of creativity circulates around you and through you.

If you are not as healthy and functional as you could be,

do what you can to be restored to total health and function. Maintain an alert mental attitude. Be willing to learn.

I've heard of people who experience hypnotic trance during meditation and who "channel" spirits and do "automatic writing." What about this?

Avoid such activity! The purpose of meditation is to be free from unconscious involvements and to experience clear awareness. When you are thus free and clear you can assume responsibility for inspirational thoughts and insights you naturally have. The hypnotic state is not a clear conscious state and cannot result in transformation and spiritual awareness.

People who claim they channel are either self-deceived, because they do not understand what is happening, or they are willing frauds who are pretending in order to satisfy some emotional need or to control others. Every enlightened teacher of whom I have knowledge advises against such practices because they are delusive and not conducive to true spiritual awareness.

Channeling, or mediumship in any form, is based on a false premise due to lack of understanding. The person involved feels himself to be a personality through which information is directed. One will then think, "I am receiving this information," instead of knowing that all knowledge is within at the level of being. Not knowing his real nature, one then feels the necessity of receiving knowledge from another source. Even if a person thinks he is receiving information in this way, it is evidence that he does not know his real nature; that he is still working from the level of ego identification. What "comes through" the mind is usually filtered through the conditionings of the mind and is, therefore, tainted. Only pure knowledge, discerned intuitively and through the exercise of intelligence, is dependable. A person who knows what is true will not claim to receive knowledge.

Creative writing, after meditation, can be a useful exercise and results should not be attributed to another source. It may be a temptation, when still somewhat unsure and emotionally dependent, to be attracted to phenomena of this nature but one should instead give his attention to realistic spiritual practices and to the matter of responsible living.

Until one is anchored in Self-realization it can be a temptation to become overly fascinated with the "different" and the "mysterious." But to do so will only be a departure from the path. The way to freedom and liberation of consciousness is through all levels of mind and emotion and to experience clear awareness. Then, established in being, it is possible to understand all things. To choose the way of phenomena and illusion is error. If you are truly on the enlightenment path you should be a warrior spirit, strong and courageous, not timid and emotionally insecure.

What about research being done to enable meditators to unfold their latent capacities? There have been reports of people being able to levitate, see through walls, and to do other interesting things.

Even this can be a diversion from the true purpose of meditation. However, advanced meditators sometimes experiment with procedures for the purpose of better understanding how the universe works. There is no harm in this if it is clearly understood that the real good is liberation of consciousness and total freedom to function in the universe. To attempt to acquire extraordinary abilities without unfolding moral and ethical qualities is to invite problems. Many reasonably functional people are not responsible in the use of abilities they currently possess.

I have witnessed "miracles" and the exercise of abilities many would consider supernatural. There are documented ac-

counts of such matters. Yet enlightenment teachers continue to affirm the way of purpose, balance and orderly living. With this foundation, whatever unfolds for a person will be in accord with his personal destiny.

Is it appropriate for me to share meditation methods with others who seem to be interested?

Of course. First, establish your own regular schedule and become somewhat proficient in practice. Then share the easy way to meditation with those who request instruction. Instruct only according to your ability. Do not attempt to teach what you do not know from personal experience. And do not think that just because you have meditated for six months or so, that you are now qualified to open a teaching center and educate the world! Allow yourself time to grow and to mature. When you are a settled meditator and the enlivening forces are active in you, you will really have something worthwhile to offer.

Is there any special value in being personally initiated into a tradition of meditation practice?

Yes, there is great value in such an experience, if it is the right connection for you. Otherwise it will be fruitless. It is not necessary for everyone to be thus initiated in order to derive benefits from simple meditation procedures.

However, for persons who are ready to commit themselves to a total program of disciplined involvement on the enlightenment path, formal initiation is extremely helpful. It is not necessary to be frantic in a search for such an experience. When you are ready, when you have prepared yourself through inner surrender and trust in God, life will provide the opportunity you need to assist you on the path.

I am having difficulty in ridding myself of attitudes, feelings and behavior which interfere with my desire to be successful in accomplishing worthwhile purposes. Is there any way to be free from these conditions?

Almost everyone, until fully conscious, experiences some difficulty in releasing thought patterns, feelings and behavior which are counterproductive. Many people entertain self-defeating myths about themselves, and life in general, which interfere with their basic inclination to be successful. A "myth" is a belief built up in the mind of a person, or in the collective mind of a group, which has no basis in fact and is not grounded in clear perception of circumstances. One may feel unloved, unworthy, destined to be a chronic failure, or incapable of ever being a free, functional person. In the extreme opposite case one may entertain delusions of being more capable than he actually is at the moment. Unrealistic as they are, such false beliefs often cause us to think, feel and behave in non-useful or even self-destructive ways.

What is needed is self-honesty, humility, and a willingness to learn and then apply procedures which have been found to be useful. In this way education is translated into experience, and with personal experience we become knowledgeable and more responsible.

Meditate deeply on a regular schedule, as this will result in a clearing of the mental field and balancing of the emotional life. Become more conscious of the being you really are, and inwardly picture yourself as a functional, successful person.

Our beliefs, and our attitudes about ourselves and our world, cause us to view the world as screened through these beliefs and attitudes. We therefore see what we are conditioned to see, instead of what is really present. Because we look at the world through our mental conditionings we tend to ex-

perience according to our expectations, and our beliefs are then reinforced. The reality is that we live in an open universe and we can learn to move freely through it. However, when we view the world through our conditionings we observe a "reality" which is personalized and limited. It is "real" to us because we perceive it and sense it as we do, but it is not the totality of what is real.

All human problems are the result of errors in perception. When we see imperfectly we draw false conclusions and make mistakes. What we experience is always in line with what we inwardly feel, or know, to be true. What we see, and expect, is what we experience. If we can see only failure, poverty, sickness and unhappiness, this is what we are likely to experience. On the other hand, if we can see only success, prosperity, health and happiness, this is what we are likely to experience.

Regardless of your present habits and attitudes, begin to see yourself as the radiant and fulfilled person you are meant to be. Out of your own consciousness, in harmony with the natural laws of the universe, the perfect fulfillment of your destiny will unfold.

It was a happy lot for the soul when God in this night put all its household to sleep—that is, all the powers, passions, affections, and desires of the sensual and spiritual soul, that it may attain to the spiritual union of the perfect love of God "unobserved"—that is, unhindered by them because they were all asleep and mortified in that night. O how happy must the soul then be when it can escape from the house of sensuality! None can understand it, I think, except that soul which has experienced it. It is, therefore, plain that no distinct object whatever that pleases the will can be of God; and for that reason, if it is to be united with Him, it must empty itself, cast away every disorderly affection of the desire, every satisfaction it may distinctly have, high and low, temporal, so that, purified and cleansed from all unruly satisfactions, joys and desires, it may be wholly occupied, with all its affections, in loving God.

—*John Yepes (called St. John of the Cross)*

SIX

Routines for Advanced Meditators

If you have been meditating for a while and have attained a degree of proficiency in your practice, you may want to consider using some of the techniques and procedures included in this chapter.

If you are a new meditator, use the procedures described in chapter two for several months until you are grounded in practice. Do not make the mistake of thinking that more advanced procedures will be productive if you have not already prepared yourself by mastering, to a degree, the preliminary methods. It is important that you become familiar with how it feels to relax and be comfortable with internal states experienced during initial phases of the meditation process. Give yourself the opportunity to derive the utmost benefit from preliminary practices before moving on to more subtle ones. Through mantra meditation alone, for instance, it is possible to experience superconsciousness and all of the consequent benefits. The key to success is to surrender to the process and let attention flow completely to the source, to the field of pure consciousness.

Alternate Nostril Breathing to Balance Flows of Life Force

This is an exercise even beginners can use with benefit. Before meditating, after sitting, place the thumb and fingers

of your hand at the nose. Close off the right nostril and inhale deeply (don't overdue it) through the left nostril...hold for a moment...close the left nostril and exhale through the right nostril. Reverse the process, inhaling through the right nostril and exhaling through the left. Continue alternate nostril breathing for a few minutes.

Remember to breathe in a little more deeply then usual, without exertion, and pause a moment after inhalation and after exhalation. An easy way to proceed is to do the complete cycle ten times per session, for ten days, then increase to fifteen or twenty times. It is not necessary to strive for high numbers; just continue gently and naturally for a few minutes, until you feel centered and *balanced*.

This exercise is a pranayama, a life force regulating process. It helps to balance the flows of subtle life force in the body and calms the mind. An extra quantity of oxygen is also supplied as a result of the slightly deeper breathing.

While practicing this exercise, let your eyes be closed and prepare yourself for inward flowing of attention as the perfect beginning of meditation.

Let Meditation Proceed Smoothly and Naturally

Sitting in your usual comfortable meditation posture, turn within and follow whatever procedure you have found to be useful to you. At this phase you may want to pray, or open your mind and consciousness to the boundless reality of God. Feel that the infinite field of Consciousness is all around you and through you, and that you are a unit of awareness in this ocean of Consciousness.

As you become more internalized you may begin to hear subtle sounds in the inner ear. The sounds may be stronger in one ear than the other, or may be equally strong in both

ears. The truth of the matter is that sound is always discernible in the ear canals because of air movement, but we are not usually aware of the sound. Listen to the sound. In the beginning you may hear only the sounds caused by air movement. Then, you will hear other sounds, perhaps a high-pitched ringing sound, or a steady sound with more "substance" to it. Or you may hear a medley of fine sounds. These initial sounds are merely frequencies of body forces, the currents and electricities in the body. Eventually you will hear a steady "roar"; you can take this as a mantra, to listen to, to dissolve in, and to transcend.

The key to success in using this technique is to select the initial sound, or sounds, and gently try to discern subtle sounds behind them, and then finer sounds behind the subtle sounds. In this way your attention is effortlessly led more deeply into meditation.

Sounds must have a source, so try to find that source by following the sound current back to its point of origin. Keep your gaze flowing through the spiritual eye as you do this. Let your feeling be in the upper brain, and slightly above the head as you practice.

Look into the spiritual eye, listen to the sound, and gently be inclined to hear "behind" the sound you hear, knowing that behind it is the field of pure awareness, the field of soundlessness, the realm of pure existence.

Some meditation traditions consider this the highest and most result-producing meditation technique available. After all preliminary procedures, we can dissolve in sound and light and flow attention to the source.

Using Inner Sound Contemplation to Experience Cosmic Consciousness

After meditation, while still aware of the inner sound, feel

that the sound (whatever frequency you hear) is an aspect of the primal sound of the universe, the creative current pervading the cosmos, that out of which all sound frequencies emerge and into which they dissolve.

Let your awareness expand in sound, feeling that you are expanding beyond the body, beyond the room where you sit, beyond the building, beyond the neighborhood, beyond the extended community. Continue to expand, as consciousness, until you contain the solar system within you, and the galaxy, and all of the galaxies in the universe. This is, of course, a gentle exercise in imagination, but it can be useful in helping you to awaken to a more cosmic relationship with life. Rest in the expanded state until you naturally come out of meditation.

Moving Upward Through the Centers of Consciousness

Along the spinal pathway, from the bottom upward to the brain, there are centers of consciousness. These are referred to as chakras. They are distribution points through which life force flows from the brain and out into the body to nourish it.

It is helpful to rise above body consciousness when meditating, and this technique can enable us to do this. After becoming settled in your meditation posture, look within and begin to meditate however you feel inclined, in order to become relaxed and settled. Then, looking into the spiritual eye, *feel* the bottom center at the base of the spine. Now, bring your *feeling* up to the center in the small of the back. Rest for a few moments. Then, bring your *feeling* up to the center in the spine opposite the solar plexus. Rest. Continue in this way, up through the center in the spine between the shoulder blades, the center in the spinal pathway opposite the throat, and into

the spiritual eye. Now your awareness is in the crown chakra (upper brain) and flowing into the spiritual eye.

You can now either let meditation unfold naturally, and go along with the flow, or you can intentionally listen to the inner sound and dissolve in it. Let your intuition be your guide. Or let your meditation be guided by the innate intelligence which knows how to direct the process.

As a result of regular practice of this technique you will, sooner or later, feel an increase in "aliveness" in the spinal pathway. This will enable you to be more easily centered when you are attending to daily tasks, and it will enable you to more quickly and easily flow into meditation whenever you sit to practice.

These techniques are among the more useful ones for giving one control over states of consciousness.

Life Force Control Results in Mastery of Internal States

The average person has little or no control over his states of consciousness. He is reasonably clear and happy for a while, then carried into moods and unwanted feelings. His states of consciousness are, for the most part, determined by his reactions to what is occurring in his environment, or by urges and tendencies rooted in deeper levels of the mind. Instead of being the master of his states of consciousness, the average person's states of consciousness are effects of external and internal forces and stimuli.

By consciously adjusting our states of consciousness we learn to master them. By experiencing slower and more refined breathing rhythms during meditation, we also experience a natural calm state because feelings and thought processes have become stilled. This gives us the opportunity to observe

changes in states of consciousness and to learn to regulate them at will.

Instead of struggling with surging emotions and restless thought patterns, we have but to sit still, turn within, and practice meditation. As we practice correctly, our breathing needs are diminished because oxygen needs are lessened, and the production of carbon dioxide, as a waste product, is lessened. Breathing then slows of its own accord. There is no effort on our part to force the slowing of the breathing rhythm. Body temperature drops slightly, metabolic processes slow down, and the body experiences deep rest. Life force and consciousness are released from identification with the body and from emotional and mental activities. Meditation proceeds easily as inner awareness remains clear.

Even during deep meditation, concentration may be disturbed because of impulses filtering in from the unconscious. These impulses are natural tendencies in the direction of expression. In time, they will remain quiet and only be expressive when we are again involved with externals, after meditation.

The influence of these subtle impulses can interfere with orderly thought processes during our active hours. However, as a result of frequent meditation the destructive or non-useful impulses will be cleansed from the mind so that only constructive impulses are present. Because of this we are able to live a truly creative and purposeful life with minimum effort.

Sustained Superconsciousness, During and After Meditation

When the meditator learns to easily experience superconsciousness during occasions of contemplation, with practice he can maintain superconscious awareness when not meditating, even when thinking, relating and performing work. This does not result in an "otherworldly" mental state; to the

contrary, it results in one being fully conscious at all times, with increasing awareness of oneness with all of nature.

The time will come when the meditator will even experience conscious sleep, if this is desired, and interludes of lucid dreaming. He will then be able to compare dream states with waking states and understand their similarity—that the waking state is really, for most people, a dream-like condition as compared to superconsciousness.

The Value of Occasional Retreats and How to Proceed

All people can benefit from occasional retreats from the usual routine schedule. Advanced meditators, in particular, should schedule such opportunities for themselves. This can be whenever one chooses, and at some quiet and secluded place. Here, one should spend more time in study of the scriptures and in prolonged meditation. Long walks can be taken during which one allows himself to feel harmony with nature and the cosmos.

Even with regular meditation in the home environment, one is often forced to be involved in circumstances which sometimes interfere with needed deeper periods of contemplation. A retreat of several days, or a week or two, can be extremely useful because it allows the meditator to be completely open to life without any interruption of any kind. Successful retreat can be experienced alone, or with one's mate or a compatible friend who is also a meditator and who will not require social and emotional support.

During this time the diet should be restricted to pure foods, and everything in the environment should be totally supportive of the purpose of the retreat.

At other times, one can schedule a personal "retreat" at home, and set aside several hours, or a weekend, for the pur-

pose of quiet contemplation and extended meditation. This is especially useful if your schedule is such that you are often pressed for time, and not always able to meditate and contemplate as much as you would like to, or should.

Be Open to the Supportive Influence of Nature

The world in which we live is Consciousness-manifesting-as the world. At all times learn to be open to the universe, open to the supportive influence of nature. Your nervous system and body is composed of the substance of nature, and to live in harmony with the world we must be attuned to it. Feel the divine life pulsing in everything about you. Sense the divine intelligence directing all natural processes, as well as your life. See all people as expressions of the one Life. In all that you do, wherever you go, behind your feelings, behind the workings of your mind, experience the changeless reality of your eternal being.

I left my friend and was walking slowly homeward, enjoying the calm beauty of the evening, when I became conscious of an unutterable stillness, and simultaneously every object about me became bathed in a soft light, clearer and more ethereal than I had ever before seen. Then a voice whispered in my soul: "God is all. He is not far away in the heaven; He is here. This grass under your feet is He; that beautiful harvest, that blue sky, those roses in your hand—you yourself are all one with Him. All is well for ever and ever, for there is no place or time where God is not." Then the earth and air and sky thrilled and vibrated to one song. . . .

— *An illumination experience by a woman known only as C.Y.E., in her own words.*

SEVEN

The World Can Be Blessed Because of Who You Are

You are important to the health and wellness of the world and I hope you know this and acknowledge your responsible role. No matter who you are, where you live on Planet Earth, what your background has been, what cultural roots you have, what color your skin is, what form of worship you prefer, what occupation you have—you are inwardly a good person, and the world can be blessed because of who you are.

Be aware of how important you are to the evolutionary process. Be aware of how you view your world, and how you interact with and influence your family, friends and associates. Every constructive thought you think, every uplifting feeling you have, benefits others and contributes to the clarity of collective consciousness. Beyond this, your silent influence extends to the smallest units of matter and to the activities in the universe beyond the most distant galaxy. You do not sense a feeling or think a thought, whether conscious or unobserved, but that the world is influenced. Even the electromagnetic field surrounding your body reacts every time you blink an eye or move a muscle.

When you are happy, the world becomes happier. When you are depressed, world consciousness responds in a small way to your mood. When you are confused, conflict occurs

in collective consciousness. When you are more enlightened, the world is made bright because of what you share with it.

I could quote a thousand or more sources to emphasize this theme. I would be but repeating what others have said so well, so many times before—and what others will say repeatedly in the future: no man is an island...we are all one family...the universe is a continuum, one organic whole...not a sparrow falls but that God knows...wherever and whenever unrighteousness is inclined to overcome righteousness, divine intervention occurs to set virtue on her seat again. It matters not who says it, the intelligence supporting the entire life process is inspiring it all. Sometimes the words flow as though set to music, at other times they are almost harsh in their brevity, but it is always the one essence speaking and the one essence listening. Are you listening? Hear the call and your response will contribute to beauty and harmony.

Why, then, if these things have been said before, and will be pronounced countless times in the future, do we again say them now? Because when truth is restated the words are fresh, as though new, and offered in ways which can meet human needs. And how often we need to be reminded of the obvious, until the spirit within is kindled and becomes a blazing fire! A few strokes of the hammer may not heat the metal sufficiently to work it, but with continued application the metal is at last rendered malleable so that the worker may conclude with perfect end results. We cannot know for certain which stroke of the hammer was most effective, when it was that shapeless form began to become finished art. We cannot know for ourselves which word, which feeling, which enlightened revelation or small insight, made the difference in our lives, and extended to the world. But we continue on our awakening way until completion, because we must.

There will never be another you. When you came into the

world, something unique occurred. No one has ever had your thoughts before. No person has ever felt your feelings, dreamed your dreams, or responded to life as you have responded. Nothing that you have ever done, or will do, can ever be duplicated by another.

Do you know how special you are? From the larger Life you came into expression, for a purpose. Your way is secret, known only to you and to God. If you have awakened to your destiny (if you have not, you will) do not depart from it. Your way is made clear to you, through grace. It is good to have the acknowledgment of others; it is better to have inner awareness of the soul and to know your right place in the unfolding drama of creation. Let all be well with you as you go about your appointed rounds. You go with power, with certainty, with love.

If you had not been born into this world, the world would not be as it is, because you have made a difference. You will continue to make a difference as you continue to unfold in the direction of all-knowledge and truth. What kind of future difference would you like to make in the world? Ask this question of yourself, and wait patiently for the answer. It will most assuredly surface in your mind with redeeming clarity.

What you have done, is done, and what you will be, in relationship to your awakening world, will be determined by your states of consciousness and your responsiveness to the Influence which nourishes us all.

EPILOGUE

The New Era: Epoch of Great Opportunity & Call to Personal Responsibility

Because infinite potential resides in consciousness, the natural urge of innate potential to express is always observed to emerge when given the opportunity. That which is innate is that which is already within, that with which consciousness is self-endowed. Throughout all of nature we can observe the coming forth of inborn capacities, from the most simple of life forms to man, the most highly evolved of all creatures on the planet. It is in the human being that the nervous system is most complex and highly refined, and it is through man that the full range of divine possibilities can most fully express. Man alone, among all living forms in nature, is able to experience full enlightenment—the capacity to know the complete truth about life and the workings of creation.

Life is a continuum, *one essence*, even though our relative perceptions may cause us to assume separateness and differences. Our limited abilities to perceive do not ordinarily allow us to discern the true order of things. Until the inner eye of discernment is opened we are inclined to see but fragments of the whole, the outer but not the inner, the objective universe but not the subjective realm of cause, that which is the origin and support of what William Blake, the eighteenth century artist-poet, referred to as "the vegetable world of nature."

Today, however, it is fairly common to read articles in the secular press informing us that physicists are now beginning to conclude that the universe, which is thought to be about

fifteen billion years old, seems to have emerged from a single, original force, and that all other "forces" in nature are but aspects of the one force. One is reminded of the opening verses of *The Gospel According to Saint John* in the New Testament of the Christian Bible. We read (1:1): "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And, in verse three: "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made." There we have it, and at last scientists and seers have a common ground upon which to meet and continue their pursuit of knowledge.

Of course, to assert oneness is not to immediately possess full knowledge of the nature of consciousness, but it is a beginning. At least we know where to look and what to examine. Then, we will have to learn *how* to examine the nature of consciousness. Meditation is useful to this end because through meditation we are able to experience our own true nature as pure awareness, the knower.

By understanding that we can know, because we are the knower, we can then discover how to know, and the formerly unknown then becomes understood. In this way does enlightenment occur.

To assert that we cannot know, that man was never meant to know, is a pseudo-intellectual opinion based on ignorance. And it is useful for us to accept the fact that we are ignorant until we are possessed of true knowledge. Honest self-assessment is the beginning of growth. Once we know that we do not know, but can, we are in a position to learn what we must do to prepare ourselves to know.

What is the best way to go about this? There is a time-honored method, that of going to those who say they know and asking them to tell us the way to knowledge. But it is not enough to ask, or to learn a little of what they claim to know.

We must apply ourselves with all diligence and test what we learn in the fires of our own daily experience until we prove the principles for ourselves. Then only can we truly know, and then only can we thereafter live and speak with full authority.

This has been the way of all sincere seekers throughout the centuries. Seers have little patience with novice seekers who seem content to request answers to their questions and then accept what is taught without following through to test and prove the teachings for themselves. To accept on faith what a knowledgeable person teaches us can be a beginning, for we must start somewhere. However, mere belief is not knowledge, and it is knowledge of the truth that alone liberates the soul.

We have said earlier in the text that meditation can be useful for persons in all walks of life and for a variety of purposes. This is true because even those who are involved in meditation practice only for improvements in health and function will, in time, experience inner transformation and eventual enlightenment. But the New Era, the dawning of which has begun, is an epoch, *a time period of great opportunity, and a call to personal responsibility* for the few among the many who are willing to focus their energies for the purpose of experiencing the unfoldment of inborn capacities in order to consciously contribute to the total good of all beings.

The exoteric, the outer, teaching is for the majority, for those who are yet for the most part involved in surface matters, thinking in terms of improving the human condition and living a more comfortable life in the years yet remaining to them in the present life cycle. The esoteric, the inner, teaching is for the few who live more from soul awareness, for those not content to merely survive the challenges of a fast-changing world, but who are more courageous, more determined, more willing to be self-responsible for final outcomes.

For the latter, every day will be an occasion of discovery. Every moment will be an instant of increased awareness and expanded knowledge. For them, the Old Order will pass away and an ideal world will unfold in proportion to their ability to perceive and acknowledge it.

It would be folly to claim that "heaven on earth" is but a few years or a few decades away, for it is not. The true Age of Enlightenment is a few thousand years in the future, but between now and then the light will become brighter and brighter. Two hundred years ago dramatic changes in planetary consciousness began to occur, and this process is now being quickened. What will unfold in the course of the next several decades will far surpass what has been experienced thus far, and many who now read these words will be here to see it. Our children, and their children, will know a world which is much more harmonious than the one now experienced by most.

At this present writing well over five billion human beings dwell on Planet Earth, and estimates are that billions more will share its resources in the next few decades. Does this prospect unsettle your mind? It need not, for there is an Intelligence directing the life process and It will see to suitable outcomes. Annually, multiplied millions of souls are born into this world, and almost equal numbers depart to subtle realms. In the infinite, unbounded ocean of consciousness trillions of souls pursue their destinies, most of them oblivious of higher possibilities or of the fact that true knowledge and soul freedom is available to them. Only a few among the many even contemplate the meaning of life, and only a small percentage of these few do anything to improve their circumstances.

What about *you*? Are you sincere in your involvement with the process of awakening? Are you intent upon the path of final freedom in God? If you are, and I hope you are, this very moment is the time to make decisions which will have far-

reaching consequences. To fulfill your soul destiny you will have to be willing to learn and, furthermore, willing to commit yourself completely to the inclination of the universe, which is in the direction of completion. To know this inclination of life is to know the will of God. To participate in the process, without reservation, is to *do* the will of God.

Contemplating and Knowing the Full Range of Consciousness

Consciousness is the only reality. It is the only life, being and substance. It can be known and experienced and, when it is, the purpose for our involvement with nature is served. Pure consciousness is self-existent and requires nothing external to itself for support. On the contrary, it is the substance and support of everything in manifestation. One aspect of it is endowed with intelligence and directs all activities in nature, nature being consciousness formed.

Pure consciousness is often referred to as spirit. When initially manifesting, expanding in the direction of manifestation, it is known as the Godhead. Souls are specialized units of the Godhead, endowed with all of the attributes and characteristics of the Godhead. This is why limitless potential is inborn, native to us.

There is no other power in the universe, no evil intelligence in contest with the will of the creator. The universe is a play of cosmic forces, and they alone are responsible for the dance of creation.

Three primary characteristics pervade and influence the universe, from the Godhead to full manifestation. Pure consciousness is devoid of characteristics, but does influence manifestation and evolution—the sending forth and withdrawal of itself, causing the outbreathing of creation, manifestation and dissolution.

The universes are manifested, say seers, because of purposeless necessity. Purposeless, because consciousness is not in need of improving upon itself by producing the worlds. Necessity, because it is the nature of consciousness to expand and contract the outer realms of itself. This process may never be understood through reasoning, because reasoning is dependent upon memory due to prior experience, but it can be known through intuitive insight, through direct revelation which satisfies the heart, the soul nature.

Only the courageous, or the surrendered, may approach the realm of pure knowledge, because it requires the renunciation of concepts, opinions, beliefs and attachments which can no longer remain during the moment of discovery.

It must be understood, therefore, that as one meditates and does his best to live in harmony with the rhythms of the universe, one's beliefs will be challenged from time to time, new beginnings will be experienced, and the time may come when all traditional foundations are no longer firm. Do not shrink from the quest because of any uncertainty or challenge, for this has been the way of all enlightened beings who have preceded you on the journey to light.

You will experience, as you progress, that the way is straight, narrow and personal. You may meet, during your lifetime, but a few persons who also know the way, and fewer still who have experienced full revelation. Do not let this cause you to falter. Do not look back, or stray from the path because of fear or weakness. You were born into the world to learn, to grow, to mature, and to rise in full glory and power as an awakened being. This will be your experience sooner or later. If so, why not sooner? Why not put an end to all the confusion and all the circumstances that trouble the heart and unsettle the mind? If you have caught even a glimpse of what is in

store for you, you have what it takes to enter into the process of transformation and soul unfoldment leading to freedom.

You need not discuss the possibility with anyone else. If others do not share your vision they will not understand your dream or your focus. Those who do share your vision will be intent upon their own path, but will share their silent support in many ways.

Become acquainted with the Bibles of the world. You will find in them the same underlying message, the same call to truth, the same basic procedures to prepare for the ultimate realization. Honor all authentic enlightenment paths while following your own. Reject nothing which is useful to higher purposes, and accept nothing which does not serve your purpose. Outwardly, relate to people in all walks of life with loving understanding; inwardly, commune with the saints and the seers of the ages. Wear the world as a loose garment, so that it is comfortable but does not restrict you. Live in society but be not of it—that is, do not be attached to circumstances or allow them to interfere with your inner work. We have heard these words before, for good reason, because they are important to hear and to remember as guidelines.

The Spirit, Mind Body Relationship

You are a spiritual being, using your mind and body for the purpose of relating to the manifest world. The beingness of you is immortal, birthless and deathless, because you are consciousness. The mind you use is a portion of cosmic mind, the omnipresent mind of God. It is to be used as a creative tool, in harmony with cosmic mind. A major problem, however, is that we often become restricted by the mind because of overly identifying with its contents. By our assertions we reveal our understanding, or lack of it. From understanding we would

say, "I am a spiritual being, using mind and body with purpose." From misunderstanding we would say, "I am a human being and I have a soul." What do you say about yourself?

To be a human being is to be a blend of divine nature (*hu,* an ancient Sanskrit term for God, "the invoked one") and mind (from the Sanskrit *manas,* or "thinking principle"). A more basic reference is *hu* from the Latin *humus,* organic material.

The soul, the spiritual being, exists prior to physical birth and survives death of the body. All rational people, as children or as adults, during quiet moments inwardly sense their immortal nature and require no further proof than their own intuitive knowing.

The soul initially comes into involvement with matter due to the outflowing impulse of pure consciousness. Once involved with matter the soul becomes so identified with it that it mistakenly assumes itself to be the aspect of matter with which it identifies. This is the initial delusion, the self-forgetting of the unit of consciousness now designated as a soul. The only problem, then, is the error of false identity, due to inability to clearly know the true nature of being. Once beingness is known, one awakens from the error which is due to temporary unknowing.

When using the mind in order to relate to nature, the soul examines information provided by the senses to the mind. It then is aware of only the objective, the outer, surface of things and not of the range of subjective aspects of consciousness. Because of this one assumes the material level of creation to be the only real existence, and is not aware of the inner side of creation.

From this basic error in perception all of the judgments which follow must, then, be incorrect. This is why there is no possibility of lasting peace of mind or inner fulfillment so long

as one's understanding is based on partial perception. It is quite possible to understand enough about the nature of the material universe to learn to live reasonably successfully in it, and still not be aware of the fact that unexplored realms exist or that the possiblity of experiencing transcendence is ever present. In less than a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (which in some philosophical systems is considered to be the smallest unit of time measurement) one can, theoretically, awaken from the "dream of mortality" and experience permanent Self-realization: conscious awareness of the Self (soul) as pure consciousness.

However, what usually happens is that the deluded soul becomes increasingly enmeshed in matter and either enjoys the involvement to some extent or attempts to find release. While working at the level of misunderstanding one is inclined to desire the wrong experiences or to emotionally react to circumstances, thus accumulating a complicated mental-emotional web of desires and memories which further complicate his life. This accumulation of desires and memories, rooted in unconscious and subconscious levels of the mind, interferes with the innate urge to live a free and spontaneous life. Because deeply rooted mental-emotional characteristics condition awareness and behavior they are somewhat causative, resulting in desirable or undesirable effects. Taken together, they constitute one's karmic condition. All perceptions and experiences which relate to the objective realm leave a tracing, a memory, on the deeper layers of the mind. Superconscious perceptions, however, leave no trace. Instead, they result in soul awakening and tend to dissolve the mental tracings and conditionings.

This is why meditation is so useful to one on the enlightenment path. Repeated superconscious experiences allow superior influences to pervade the mental field, to resist, restrain, and cleanse destructive and nonuseful patterns from the mind. Even

advanced meditators, those who almost always experience pure awareness, even when involved in routine activities, should continue to meditate deeply. Such deep meditation, in time, purifies the entire range of the mind and dissolves all seeds of cause, enabling one to live intuitively and freely at all times.

Some saints known to history, while obviously having experienced the beatific vision, also displayed behavior and expressed ideas which, if not unrealistic and out of character, at the very least were indications of eccentricity. Such unconventional behavior is usually considered to be quaint and evidence of our common sameness as human beings, or else of little consequence because of the overpowering evidence of divine radiance in the saintly person. This is not to say, however, that such evidence of lingering mental-emotional conditioning is necessary.

One's collective accumulation of mental-emotional conditionings can be classified, and thus dealt with, according to need and personal inclination. Persistent desires, drives, strong feelings, and reactive patterns which interfere with personal choice and freedom should be examined, understood, and their influence diminished. If resisted they can be weakened and rendered powerless. Alternatively they can be rechanneled and the psychic forces contained within them directed to useful ends. Conditionings which are not very influential, but which do present an occasional challenge, can be neutralized. Deepseated patterns, usually stored in hidden regions of the unconscious, are usually not consciously recognized. They, too, can be dissolved as a result of regular superconscious experiences and conscious, spontaneous living. Eventually the entire range of the mind will be illumined and all restricting influences removed, allowing the soul's abilities and capacities to easily unfold and be expressed.

Soul awareness filters through the mind and nervous

system into the body, affecting function. When we are alert and spiritually aware, mental processes tend to function in an orderly fashion and the body is enlivened as creative forces flow in full force. However, when we are confused, fearful, pessimistic or depressed, mental processes are disturbed, the nervous system becomes stressed, and bodily functions are likely to be impaired.

It is by mastering states of consciousness, and mental states, that we are able to master bodily functions. Even people who are not aware of the relationship between themselves, the mind and the body, experience the effects of either constructive or destructive causes initiated at the levels of awareness, thinking and feeling. With just a little encouragement the average person can be taught to maintain an optimistic outlook on life, and this will result in improved mental ability, emotional harmony, and better health in general.

But a motivated person can do more! He can learn to so live that he is always conscious, even when the body sleeps, and when he is involved in daily activities and relationships. Such a one can accomplish much by learning to be self-aware at all times, by being the "witness" to his own thoughts, feelings, and behavior and to circumstances which unfold.

A Closer Examination of States of Consciousness During Meditation

When the body relaxes, feelings become quiet and thoughts rest; during conscious meditation, superconsciousness is experienced. This is a state of pure awareness during which feelings are absent and mental images no longer float in the mind. This is a state of relaxed awareness and complete rest. This is not the state of consciousness which automatically results in enlightenment but it is a state from which to con-

template possibilities. Merely to experience superconsciousness in this manner on a regular schedule will greatly contribute to health and wellness on all levels.

By surrendering completely, while being willing to discover what is to be known, meditation proceeds easily. Eventually the meditator rests in the clear awareness of his nature as being, knowing that the soul nature is pure consciousness and a specialized unit of the boundless field of pure consciousness. This is Self (soul) -realization.

With continued, and deeper, superconscious experiences one becomes increasingly aware of living in harmony with nature. One knows an effortless relationship with life forms, people and circumstances and begins to consciously discern the supportive influence pervading nature. The current of evolution becomes apparent, and one becomes increasingly open and responsive to it. In this way grace is experienced; the unearned, unasked for goodness of life unfolds in one's life as benevolent support, unplanned opportunity and easy fulfillment of worthy projects. Life seems to give more and more of itself to the devotee. The desires of the heart are fulfilled and the process of spiritual awakening accelerates to the point that one feels carried along in the direction of final liberation of consciousness.

Eventually, the reality of God is known in full glory and power. What seers and sages have talked about, what the seeker of truth has earnestly sought to know, is revealed. The power, beauty and cosmic awesomeness of the reality of God is beyond words and thoughts, so glorious is it to experience.

In the early stages, the subtle and fine perceptions of higher consciousness can only be known during thoughtless meditation. This is because the nervous system of the meditator has yet to adapt to processing fine impulses to transfer them to the mind and body. Eventually, however, one is able to come

out of meditation with full inner realization intact, and to function through mind and body in practical ways with no loss of pure consciousness. Pure consciousness, thoughts, feelings and actions then flow in perfect harmony and behind all thoughts, feelings and actions there remains unbroken awareness of the transcendental field. From this point on, one lives free in an open universe. To him nothing is hidden and for him there is nothing more to attain, nothing more for which to strive.

Notice, please, that states of consciousness are just that. They are states or levels—they are not, in themselves, knowledge. They are levels of awareness from which we can examine, ponder, and contemplate, so that knowledge can be acquired. Of course, each state of consciousness contains knowledge of that particular state, but not knowledge of anything removed from that state. The transcendental experience transcends states, and is awareness and knowledge of itself. Resting in the transcendental experience one has no awareness or knowledge of manifest realms because, as the word reveals, that which is transcendental is not involved with relative occurrences.

It is a mistake to assume that a person who experiences transcendental awareness, pure consciousness, automatically knows everything about relative matters. This is not the case, unless such a one turns his attention to relative matters with the intent to know; then knowledge is acquired. I mention this because the novice truth seeker may assume that an advanced meditator knows, or should know, the answers to all questions posed and the solutions to every imaginable problem. A seer can know, by contemplating a question or a problem, but the fact of his constant superconscious experience does not guarantee his knowledge of relative matters. I never met a saint who "knew everything." If they did they would never ask anyone's advice and invite into their company people more

competent than they when involved with projects about which they have had no personal experience.

On Coming to Terms with the World in Which We Live

Until we have fulfilled the purpose for having come into this world we will reside here, and we are wise to make the most of our present opportunity—not only to learn, but to serve.

So long as there are things to know which are presently unknown to us and which we need to know, we can look upon our involvement with the world as a learning and maturing opportunity. But the world was not created merely for our personal experience; something else needs to be understood about the world. Nature is constantly undergoing transformation and mankind, being involved with the process, is being powerfully influenced. We, then, have a responsibility to look about us and find out what is expected of us. We are not here for our own purposes—we are here for a higher purpose! And the more we examine the matter the more we understand that our own spiritual fulfillment is intimately involved with the fulfillment of evolutionary purposes.

This is not to say that some souls will not eventually withdraw from manifest realms and rest in the unmanifest field of consciousness—they will—but before they do they will have "paid their dues" in the form of service to the evolutionary process. Now, I'm not talking about a God who won't let us get away without our having followed a planned script. I'm referring to the fact that as we pursue understanding we find out that part of the learning process has to do with understanding the nature of the manifest universe, how it works and why it is here in the first place.

For many sincere seekers, coming to terms with the

manifest universe is a major challenge. They are often overly attracted to it and, if they do not become almost totally overcome by it, they fear they will. They are sometimes averse to it, feeling that a relationship with it is not really very spiritual, and they may even fall back upon the simplistic excuse that asserts the universe to be an illusion, not really "real," just an appearance cognized because of delusion, not really there except in false imagining.

Well, the universe is "there" all right, because it is a multidimensional manifestation of cosmic forces which, in turn, have their origins in the Godhead which, in turn, is the outward expression of the unmanifest field of consciousness. If you've got that straight, you're on the right track.

Behind the liquids, gases and solids of creation are molecules, atoms and subatomic forces, and behind them is light, and behind light is consciousness. A clear understanding of this order of circumstances enables some enlightened people to easily do things that most mortals consider to be miraculous. To them "miracles" are no more difficult than it is for the average person to add or subtract simple numbers or to bake a loaf of bread. One saint, when asked how he performed miracles, answered, "I have self-confidence."

If pressed to explain in more detail he might have said that he possessed *soul*-confidence, because average self-confidence based on self-esteem, from a personality level, while in itself useful would not be sufficient to manipulate finer forces by simple intention.

To more realistically come to terms with the universe I encourage you to attend carefully to the recommendations given in chapter four of this book. Remember, if you have any problems about living in the world you have yet to learn to relate to it. So study, meditate, cultivate the virtues and live a fully conscious and responsible life in this incarnation. It is

the best schooling you can ever have to prepare you for your future. By so doing you will fulfill your soul destiny and contribute useful influence to world consciousness.

Just as personal challenge, if accepted as an opportunity for learning and growth, can be a stepping stone to maturity, so present global challenges are opportunities for all members of society to unfold and actualize their noblest qualities.

As of this writing at least two-thirds of the people on Planet Earth are living in deprived circumstances. We do not have to look at the so-called third world countries to be informed of prevailing conditions. We can also look at industrialized societies and observe evidence of mass ignorance, confusion and instances of loneliness due to spiritual impoverishment. At least fifty million Americans, according to a recent report, cannot comprehend what they read in the daily newspaper and find it difficult to fill out a simple job application form. The environment is being polluted and millions are hungry even though food is available in abundance in many parts of the world. Thankfully, our attention is now turning to these problems and solutions will surely be forthcoming.

True, millions of people are today turning to "consciousness-raising" possibilities, reading "new age" literature and enrolling in programs advertised as being helpful to persons interested in becoming what they are meant to be. However, many who are shopping in the new age marketplace proceed with about the same forethought and intelligence they might exercise if they were enrolling in a twice-a-week aerobics class or planning a weekend outing.

Hundreds of thousands of men and women attend weekly church services, listen to an inspirational message to prime them for the week ahead, visit with their friends during fellowship hour, and then fall back into their habitual routines to cope and survive as best they can, assuming that what they

heard in church, and possibly experienced, was a pleasant reminder but not really all that important in their lives.

What has been here touched upon is not criticism, merely an observation of conditions and trends. We now know what the situation is, and what we must do to constructively participate in the process of evolution. There is increasing need today of spiritual education, the spreading of factual and useful information about the nature of God, man, and the purpose of life. There is increasing need today for responsible and committed persons to attend to their own inner growth and to open themselves to the influence of higher forces which are even now moving into the affairs of men with increasing intensity. World improvement begins with self improvement, for we cannot share with others what we ourselves do not have and we cannot inspire others to follow our example if we have not learned to live in harmony with the natural order.

Well do I recall an early evening in 1950, shortly after I had been accepted as a disciple of my guru, Paramahansa Yogananda. A group of young men had gathered about him and, as always with us, he spoke to us of God and of the importance of steadiness on the spiritual path. One of the group informed Paramahansaji of his interest in becoming a minister, to which the master replied, "Prepare yourself now. In the near future the need will be great for true teachers. The world will undergo great changes. Today, thousands are seeking; in the near future, millions will be yearning for God-realization!"

Paramahansaji knew, as many seers have known for centuries, that our present time cycle is one during which divine and cosmic forces will increasingly infiltrate planetary consciousness, causing a clearing of man's perceptual abilities and allowing increased soul awareness to unfold. The latter half of the ninth decade of the current century, during which I now write these words, has been referred to, by many seers, as "the

hour of God." It marks a critical phase in man's evolution, during which a dramatic awakening of spiritual consciousness is taking place among the people of the planet. The phase is welcomed by many, and it is confusing to many more. It demands that we, finally, become self-honest and sincerely think about what our role in the cosmos really is—and what is expected of us because of who and what we really are as spiritual beings.

Shall We Look for a Messiah? To What Can We Turn During these Challenging Times?

In traditional religious teachings a *messiah*, an "anointed one," is sent into the world from time to time to assist the process of evolution and to direct mankind's attention to higher values. Throughout the ages many savior types have graced the planet and performed their role and function to keep us on a reasonably steady course. More will come, increasingly so, as the years unfold. Their function is two-fold: to infuse planetary consciousness with divine power, and to invite spiritually receptive souls to follow their example. It would be a mistake to expect any enlightened person to save us from our own folly, or to do for us what we must do for ourselves.

Once, during my first meeting with a certain saint, in India, he said to me, "It is not enough to be a disciple of a great master. One must become like the master!"

It is not enough for a Christian to merely believe in the divinity of Jesus. A Christian must become like Jesus. He must have "that mind in him" which was in Jesus, the anointed of God, the Christ. It is not enough for a Buddhist to believe in the reality of Buddha, and to honor him. A Buddhist must prepare himself to experience personally the "Buddha mind," the enlightened condition. So it is for devotees of all religious

traditions. They must strive to, themselves, embody the consciousness and the qualities they admire in their hero spirits.

Man's only true savior is his own awakened spiritual consciousness. Realization alone can dispel mental darkness, purify the intellect, awaken intuition and enable us to flow through space and time without restrictions of any kind. This is what all enlightened teachers emphasize and what all Bibles reveal.

My conscious awareness of who I am and what my relationship with the cosmos is, determines my present and future experiences. Your conscious awareness of who you are and what your relationship with the cosmos is, determines your present and future experiences. This is the truth. This is the single determining factor that makes the difference between mediocrity and total freedom.

There is a known way, there is the truth about life, there is the admonition given us by all spiritual lights to live anchored in God. The way is often strait, that is, difficult and challenging. The truth cannot be known except mind and consciousness be purified. A life anchored in God is the ultimate predestined experience of every soul. Therefore, one on the enlightenment path must be willing to clearly see the goal, engage in necessary disciplines, and be totally committed to the process of growth and learning. The great opportunities before us are often extolled, but the matter of personal responsibility is often left unstated—so I emphasize it now.

Buddha said it: "Only he who lives the life shall know the doctrine." Jesus said it: "If you abide in my word, then are you my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Krishna said it: "Whatever you do: eat, work, practice self-discipline; do it with the thought that Spirit is doing it through you." The Old Testament prophets said it: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

And, surely, at one time or another, you must have prayed, "O God, I yearn to know thee!"

The most basic desire of the soul is to know its relationship with God. This cannot be forever denied. Look in countless different directions for lasting contentment and you will not experience it. Look to the source and all desires are satisfied.

Live Out of Beingness;
See All Things Provided

Take this lesson to heart when you meditate: *Live out of the awareness of being; see all things now available to you.* When you meditate, remember that you are already, at the inmost center, pure and perfect. There is nothing to attain; there is only that of you which is already self-complete, to be acknowledged and consciously experienced.

What are the signs of spiritual progress? Are minor psychic abilities, partial control over the environment, and fleeting astral visions indications of spiritual progress? Not really, for these can be experienced by anyone who gives a little time to the cultivation of them. No, the sure signs of spiritual progress are: peace of mind, inner serenity, unerring guidance, compassion for others, renunciation of addictive and destructive behavior, insight into the nature of consciousness, and increasing awareness of the reality of God, to mention but a few.

During the calm of meditation, when one thought stream dissolves and before another surfaces, during this interlude, superconsciousness is experienced. With patient practice these interludes become longer in duration, until the mind is clear and pure consciousness prevails.

Retain the calm of meditation as you engage in your daily activities. You will begin to perceive that whatever occurs about you has a dream-like quality. You will be able to see through surface matters to underlying causes of events and cir-

cumstances. You will discern, without judgment, the mechanical behavior of many people and remember how you were once just as mechanical and unthinking. You will learn to decide what is important in your life, and let unimportant matters go. You will become dispassionate, calm, devoid of personal judgments, no longer emotionally attached or overly involved. You will enjoy life and experience pleasure, but enjoyment and the pursuit of pleasure will not dominate your reason.

You will understand that you already have everything, because consciousness is all-inclusive. While others about you may be experiencing the hell of their own creation, or the suffering which can result in cleansing, or what they may consider to be the highest human happiness, you will live in heaven, perfectly clear, conscious and fulfilled, because you have awakened from all that formerly engaged your attention.

Your enlightened condition will infuse collective planetary consciousness with light, and with redeeming influence. You will not have to struggle to change the world, for you will have changed your view of the world. Goodness flows from you and it is His will that prevails.

Observe the guidelines, the commandments. Be harmless, honest, truthful, disciplined, generous, content, pure, studious, prayerful, meditative and surrendered. As you awaken, little by little, all of the things you did because you were obedient will be natural and spontaneous.

Above all, remain steady on the path, firm in your vow to continue to the end, which will be your full awakening in God. If many years yet remain for you on earth you will be that much better able to serve others. If only a few years remain, you can best prepare for conscious transition by attending to your spiritual practices. Let not a day go by without sitting for a while in the deep silence, being open to the Infinite. As

you are faithful to life, life will be faithful to you, in abundant measure.

Cultivate devotion, balanced with intelligent inquiry. Devotion without the tempering of reason can lead to blind emotion. The exercise of intelligence, without the influence of devotion, can lead to arrogance and a smug sense of false pride, causing one to feel that he knows everything when, really, he is but a novice before the grandeur of the cosmos.

The soul's innate urge to consciously experience omnipresence should be the dominant motivating force on the enlightenment path. While many meditators begin their practice because they have personal needs to be met, such as stress reduction or healing of one kind or another (and this is a natural place from which to start), one on the enlightenment path, after putting his personal affairs in order, should surrender all ego drives and be totally involved with the process of transformation, purification and soul awakening. Do not make the mistake of becoming proud of your attainments or of being complacent because you have mastered certain procedures or techniques. We should be proficient and we should develop our skills and executive abilities, but proficiency and ability should be utilized for life's major purposes. Eventually the full range of our soul abilities will be released so that nothing within the bounds of natural laws will be impossible to us. Even so, we must always remember from whence the power comes and by whose grace we are allowed to express it.

One saint said, "A person, even one who is spiritually advanced, who is conscious of using his powers is not safe with them." The implication is that it is far better to be conscious that the supreme power is using us for its purposes. There will come a time when the enlightened person is so clear and responsive that his every thought and deed is an accurate

response to the impulses of the intelligence which is directing the process of evolution.

It is possible for a sincere devotee to become misled into thinking that his knowledge of philosophy, his expertise with meditation techniques, and his "connections" with those who are considered to be authorities about spiritual matters are sufficient to assure his continued unfoldment and ultimate enlightenment. It is possible to forget that the men and women who shine as radiant examples of full enlightenment have often spent years involved in the most intense practice, and numberless hours, days, months, and sometimes years in prayer and inner searching. With all of your attention to technique and formula have you forgotten how to pray? Have you forgotten how to "cast yourself upon the Lord" and ask for help? Have you become settled in your ways and indifferent to the useful ways of others? Do you feel that you are extremely fortunate to have found the path, while others have yet to find it? Even devotees on the enlightenment path sometimes need to guard against self-deception and foolishness.

The beingness of me, of you, of every person and every sentient creature, is the same. Only identification with body and mind accounts for seeming diversity. Our views of the world may differ, our personality make-up differs, but at the core we are all the same—we are rays of the one light of pure consciousness. Nothing can diminish, or improve upon this.

When we depart from beingness we wander in the maze of forces and tendencies which comprise the fabric of nature. We lose our way and forget who we are. All of man's troubles are caused by his lack of awareness of his own beingness. Troubles cease when one is restored to correct understanding, grounded in realization.

Living from beingness we are fearless, because there is nothing external to us to threaten. We are successful, because

failure cannot exist in a perfect world. We are healthy, because order and right action is the rule in our lives. We are affluent, because beingness knows no lack or limitation. We are content, because we are in need of nothing. We are free, because bondage is only due to misunderstanding. Life is effortless, because grace abounds.

APPENDIX

An Examination of Superconscious States, Transformative Occurrences and Enlightenment

The aspiration to be enlightened, to consciously know the complete meaning of life and to live in harmony with the cosmos, is not unique to current occupants of Planet Earth. Man's history, both in written form and in oral tradition, reveals that this urge has been dominant, in some, for many thousands of years. In many cultures, a considerable body of literature has evolved in which enlightenment is stressed as the ideal, and many procedures and methods are detailed purporting to show the sincere seeker the way to experience this ideal state.

One of the very first things a prepared truth student learns is that revelation is not the sole preserve of any person or group, nor is it limited to any one system or organized tradition. One intent on the enlightenment quest must be willing to learn at every opportunity, from every authentic source, and to renounce all prejudices. Preference there may be, depending upon the choices and needs of the disciple, but one must clearly understand that the *way* is not sectarian or geographical.

One may be drawn to a form of practice for any number of reasons. Perhaps Christian mysticism is most attractive to one person, while another may adapt more easily to Yoga practices, or to the Zen Buddhist way of simplicity (which may not in fact be so simple to comprehend or to actualize), or to another approach which has a different cultural

flavoring, or to no traditional methodology at all. Whatever proves most useful to the individual will be that person's path, so let us rid ourselves once and for all of any notion that there are formidable differences between approaches because of their cultural or geographical origins. Forget anything negative you have heard, or believed, about "Western" versus "Eastern" teachings. What is the truth will remain true, and it is not in any way dependent upon times, places, or circumstances.

Why, then, is much of the data we have available today about the nature of consciousness, the nature of man, about psychology and spiritual practices, shared from the ancient texts of the East? The answer is obvious—seers of the Middle East, India, and Asia researched the inner realms of consciousness thousands of years ago and their findings are preserved in scripture. Native traditions of Africa and the Americas also provide us with much informative material concerning the creation story, man's true nature, and the ideal of a conscious relationship with the Creator.

Although reared in an orthodox Christian tradition, and while not rejecting or forsaking meaningful aspects of Christianity, I happened to find the yogic approach suitable to my temperament and more than adequate to assist me on the enlightenment path. One popular definition of *Yoga* is "the discipline which leads to the experience of union of the soul with the oversoul." A more specific definition is "unity" or "oneness" with the one life.

The way of a yogi, one who practices Yoga, is the way of love, selfless service, intellectual examination of the nature of consciousness, meditation, and surrender to God so that the boundaries of the ego are dissolved. Included in the process may be intentional practices and procedures discovered to be useful in assisting the practitioner of Yoga; such practices can help him to experience an awakening of dormant vital forces, balance internal states, clear the emotional life, calm the mind

and experience superconscious states in a predictable way. In other words, Yoga is a scientific approach, because it has been researched and proven, as are some other approaches which go by different names. In fact, any person who engages in disciplined practice for the purpose of contributing to soul awakening and a conscious relationship with God is practicing a form of Yoga, even if yogic terminology is not known or used.

Without some form of discipline, without a committed approach to the goal of enlightenment, it is unlikely that a seeker, no matter how sincere, will be successful in his efforts.

It is easy to assert that at the inmost center we are already bright, clear and perfect. This happens to be true. It is quite another matter, however, to actualize our soul capacities and live a free and unrestricted life. Anyone who has given any contemplative thought to the matter knows this to be so.

Once we know that enlightenment is our purpose, once we know what we need to do to prepare ourselves, the first major step in the right direction is to enter fully into the process and acquire experience as a result of such total participation. This is the only way we will ever master states of consciousness, neutralize our inner destructive drives and tendencies, and live as the radiant beings we are meant to be.

Because we are all rays of the one light of consciousness we possess the same capacities. Only mental conditionings, emotional states, and individual differences in the nervous system contribute to the variety of personality types and aptitudes found among human beings.

One may sincerely desire to live a righteous life and to know the inmost secrets of the universe (and this is helpful because it provides motivation), but so long as one remains restricted by a restless mind, conflicting emotional states, and an unresponsive nervous system, intellectual powers and intu-

itive abilities will be somewhat obscured. This is why it is useful for one on the enlightenment path to know about and practice procedures which will enable him to settle the mind, clear the feeling nature, and contribute to the refinement of the nervous system.

Inner Changes as a Result of Sustained Superconsciousness

Superconsciousness, as mentioned in the body of the preceding text, is that state of consciousness which is experienced when one remains alert after emotional turbulence and mental activity cease. It is, then, a clear state of awareness, quite different from unconsciousness, subconscious states, or the ordinary waking condition.

When we are unconscious we are almost completely unaware, and mental and emotional patterns and urges remain dormant. We usually experience this state during deep, dreamless sleep. When relating to the subconscious level of the mind we are usually dreaming, in a suggestible state of awareness, or preoccupied with memories. When in the conscious state, we are aware of ourselves and our environment, and also of our feelings, moods, urges and memories, all of which are rooted in deeper levels of the mind. When influenced by subconscious tendencies, and involved with sense-related perceptions, our attention is usually so involved that clear states of consciousness are not experienced.

During deep meditation, as well as during occasions of spontaneous transcendence during the day, we remain aloof from the urges and distractions of the lower mind. It is during such intervals that we are free to contemplate more subtle matters and to exercise our intellectual powers. It is at this time that intuition is more likely to be unveiled and direct perception of reality experienced.

But there is more. As a result of experiencing superconsciousness on a sustained basis, fine influences from the superconscious field of consciousness play in the mental field and contribute to the weakening of destructive drives, habits and tendencies. In this way is the mental field eventually cleared of all conditionings which inhibit the spontaneous expression of the soul. Further, superconscious influences extend into the brain and throughout the nervous system, refining and restructuring it so that it is more and more responsive to finer impulses.

Anyone who has meditated for a period of time knows that it is possible during meditation to experience a degree of tranquillity and serene awareness, during which self-completeness is the norm. But after meditation, when attention once again encompasses the contents of the mind, the emotional nature, and daily circumstances, one is often brought back to the world in which fulfillment is not known and harmony does not prevail.

However, if one will persist in the correct and regular practice of meditation, without being overly anxious about final results, as the months and years unfold he will experience definite changes in his outlook, his moods, his relationships, and his ability to understand the life process. Results are assured for that person who is faithfully engaged in spiritual practices, who attends to his duties in the correct way, and who continues to meditate and experience superconscious states.

In yogic terminology the superconscious state is referred to as *samadhi.* When mental currents are harmonized, samadhi is experienced. Meditative superconsciousness is not a state of trance during which one is unconscious, or oblivious of what is occurring. To the contrary, superconsciousness is a state of awareness during which one is most fully his true self.

There are degrees of superconscious experience. In the

early stages the meditator will feel that, for the most part, his awareness is clear and unbounded, while random thoughts persist. He may then try too hard to suppress remaining thought streams and thus bring his attention back to mental involvement. He should, instead, ignore such thoughts and feelings and surrender to superconscious contemplation.

The meditator may then rest for a duration in a pure superconscious state of awareness. During this phase he will experience only being. After becoming proficient in experiencing the superconscious state the meditator may then be inclined to contemplate, flow his undistracted attention to such matters as wanting to know the nature of God, the process of cosmic activity, or the solution to a problem. Such contemplation during superconsciousness enables the meditator to acquire perfect insight into the nature of whatever is contemplated. In this way does one become a seer, one who knows the inmost truth about life.

The person on the enlightenment path will undergo many changes. It may be that, as a result of practice, one experiences improved health, better relationships, more success in ventures and emotional and mental tranquillity. Such seeming evidence of steady improvement may continue for some time. Then at some point one may be compelled, because of inner changes or outer challenge, to more seriously assess his "attainment" and his relationships and purposes in life. The reason for this is that, as we grow in the direction of maturity, heretofore dormant conditionings surface and have to be handled. Also, our destined soul path becomes increasingly more clear. We discover that until complete transformation is effected at deeper levels, there will always be the need to remain alert and to be open to new insight.

With inner changes there may be outer changes, even of a mildly disruptive nature. One should not shrink from such

challenge, for it is an opportunity to continue to learn. Some meditators mistakenly assume that they have gotten off the path or have fallen from grace when internal and external challenges surface. They have not yet learned the fact that this side of perfection there will always be new circumstances to confront and to come to terms with. This is why the enlightenment path is such an adventure. The force of evolution will not let us become complacent. Once we are surrendered to it, it will ensure that we complete the process of purification and liberation of consciousness.

There is a difference between enlightenment and liberation of consciousness. One may be enlightened but still be working through a conditioned mind and as yet unrefined body. Therefore, even with the knowledge available as the result of enlightenment, one may remain somewhat the victim of inner and outer circumstances. It is only when inner conditionings are dissolved, and one can flow easily through time and space, that the soul is liberated from the challenge of present events and the possibilities of future challenges.

Once we have surrendered to the transformation process, with enlightenment and liberation as our certain goal, we begin to experience the support of subtle forces in nature which actually carry us along to the conclusion. Of course, we have to learn to become aware of these forces and to be responsive to them, but once we have given ourselves to the path there is no turning back.

When one has practiced superconscious meditation on a regular schedule for a period of time and has become used to the experience, the nervous system becomes refined, and superconscious awareness will then be increasingly common during ordinary occasions. One will discover that even while involved with routine activities, inner awareness is more clear and expansive. Awareness of the ocean of consciousness along

with the personal sense of identity will be normal. One will be able to move through the world more easily, discerning causes behind effects and noting trends leading to probable conclusions. Even during sleep, awareness will be evident and conscious dreams will be more frequent. While experiencing normal shifts in states of consciousness, and emotional states, there will be a permanent background of clear awareness. Superconsciousness will become increasingly prominent and effortlessly sustained.

Instances of spontaneous superconsciousness are not unknown. In 1901, Richard Maurice Bucke, M.D., a Canadian physician, published *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind*, in which he wrote of his belief that mankind is moving in the direction of a more enlightened condition. He included in the text several instances of various men and women who had experienced what the author considered to be partial or full cosmic consciousness.

Many whom Dr. Bucke mentioned had no prior intimation of illumination, but all were healthy, mature personalities who were capable of awakening to a higher level of awareness quite easily. It is of interest to note that in his book Dr. Bucke pointed out that among those who experienced a degree of awakening, only those with prior experience in some form of meditation were later able to put themselves willingly into a receptive state of consciousness and summon the "cosmic state" at will. However, even those for whom the experience was fleeting experienced dramatic changes in their lives—they became more compassionate, more understanding of others, and for them the fear of death and after-death states was banished forever.

Women experience superconsciousness as readily as do men. A healthy-minded disposition, if not a requirement, certainly seems to be helpful and enables one to undergo internal

changes more easily. In instances of spontaneous transcendence evidence points to an overwheming incidence during early middle age, while one is at the peak of physical and mental capacities. However, with the knowledge of specific meditation techniques and faithful practice, superconsciousness can be experienced by any reasonably aware person.

What Determines Our Progress on the Enlightenment Path

Once committed on the enlightenment path one's progress can be determined by a variety of factors. First, of course, is individual predisposition. If one is healthy, psychologically stable, possessed of keen perceptual abilities, and focused in his resolve, progress can be rapid. Let it be known, however, that many people who are naturally endowed with constructive characteristics are not always intent on the path. They may begin with enthusiasm and then waver and even lose interest for a time. Steadiness on the path is necessary, and a willingness to commit oneself to the process until results are final.

Some who are interested in the enlightenment process are medium in the intensity of their involvement. They are more than casually interested but often lack the resolve or the concentration to persist.

Then there are some who are only vaguely interested. Their involvement is mild, and results are similarly unspectacular.

A committed person should seek out the best instruction and then engage himself in earnest. A person who is moderate in intensity should meditate regularly, live an orderly life, and pray for guidance. Mildly interested persons can meditate daily for personal benefits, live a decent, law-abiding life and serve society with honest work. Even a little effort will be fruitful, and one will unfold in accord with natural law even if involvement is not intense.

All people, regardless of their present level of under-

standing or degree of conscious involvement on the enlightenment path, can benefit by practicing the presence of God to the best of personal ability. This will result in a quickening of the soul nature and a more secure relationship with the world. It will also prove to be the best safeguard from the many temptations one may encounter along the way.

It is not difficult to practice the presence of God. Merely let your thoughts turn more and more to God, as you presently understand the nature of God, and open yourself to the possibility of becoming increasingly aware of God. Everything else will follow naturally.

You may have heard extreme statements by one authority figure or another, such as: "The way to soul freedom is a pathless path," or "No one can show you the way; you must find it for yourself." True, the way is often personal and it requires of us that we be courageous and alert, but it is not true that we cannot be shown the way. Through the centuries many lightbearers have shown the way, by words and by example. What some teachers rightly suggest is that we should be careful not to become so attached to a system that we forget that the purpose of a useful system or process is to enable us to experience freedom.

To reject proven procedures will not result in our enlightenment, and to avoid the admonitions of the seers will not result in wisdom. A wise person will use every available aid on the path and will heed the teachings of the masters, those who have awakened completely and whose major purpose for remaining embodied is to encourage us in the right direction.

Psychological maturity and a developed moral sense should accompany spiritual awakening. Of what practical value is knowledge if we are not equipped to use it? Knowledge in the hands of an emotionally immature person, or a person who is egocentric, can be used unwisely, causing personal and

social injury. This is not to say that we should not acquire knowledge and unfold our abilities. We should, while at the same time cultivating all of the noble qualities and characteristics. In this way do our realizations benefit us and the world.

The brain and nervous system are designed to express cosmic consciousness. By doing our part, in attending to spiritual practices and becoming increasingly receptive to finer frequencies of superconscious influence, the last major step in the evolution of the bodily form occurs and through man God is glorified.

RECOMMENDED READING AND STUDY PROGRAM

Acquire a selection of authoritative books and materials for inspirational reading and deeper study. I emphasize the writings of spiritually and emotionally mature authors, those who have demonstrated in their own lives the principles of which they write. Avoid, as regular study material, philosophical speculation and egocentric themes. You become somewhat attuned to the state of consciousness experienced by the author when he wrote the material, so you want to be sure you are attuning to the highest and best. You will, of course, include selections not listed here which appeal to you and assist you in positive ways. The following represent but a few which I recommend.

Among my books: *How You can Use the Technique of Creative Imagination*, for the purpose of coming to terms with matters relating to practical everyday living; *Light on the Spiritual Path*, a commentrary on the *Bhagavad Gita*, in which almost every question one might have on the enlightenment path is clearly answered; *This Is Reality*, an easy-to-read commentary on the *Yoga Sutras*; *The Science of Kriya Yoga*, a commentary on the *Yoga Sutras* for those more involved with traditional yogic practices; *The Christ of God: Light of the World*, for an esoteric understanding of the New Testament; *Our Awakening World*, an explanation of the categories of cos-

mic manifestation, an overview of Ayurveda, the approach to wellness through harmony with the rhythms of nature, and a handbook of spiritual practices. These titles are published by CSA Press.

Autobiography of a Yogi, by Paramahansa Yogananda, is highly recommended for all people, regardless of one's personal mode of worship or present traditional religious affiliation. Published by Self-Realization Fellowship and widely available.

Books and publications made available by Unity School of Practical Christianity (Unity Village, Missouri) are helpful to many, as are the publications of Science of Mind (Los Angeles, California). The writings of Joel S. Goldsmith are helpful to one involved in meditation and contemplation.

An excellent food guide is *Diet & Nutrition* by Dr. Rudolph Ballentine, published by Himalayan Publishers (Honesdale, Pennsylvania).

If you are new on the path these recommended books will get you started. If you have been involved for some time you probably already know your way around the publishing field. The key is to always glean useful information and then apply it. Become an authority yourself, testing what you learn.

If you become confused by too much reading, always return to the basics: self-discipline as needed; contemplation of the nature of God and the world; regular meditation to experience superconsciousness; and learning to be open to the flow of grace by letting ego sense diminish.

GLOSSARY

The following definitions of words and terms may be helpful for a more complete understanding of the text. The only Sanskrit words listed are those which have entered into common usage.

affirmations — Affirmations are statements used to assist one in experiencing a desired state of consciousness. Ideally they are not used to program the subconscious, but to contemplate and actualize so that feelings, moods and level of awareness reflect the premise of the affirmation. A practical way to use an affirmation is to speak it aloud, then speak it quietly, then whisper it, letting the process continue to mental affirmation, then dissolving into realization. With realization, effects will filter down into mental layers and body levels.

Ayurveda — Science of Life. Said to have its basis in life itself, therefore without beginning. According to mythology, the science of Ayurveda passed from the gods to man. Chinese medicine is also believed to have been passed down from a previous Golden Age, and there is a similarity between Ayurvedic and Chinese medical procedures. Both include a total examination of the patient—pulse, temperature, skin condition, condition of the eyes, psychological makeup, and other factors, when making a diagonosis. Ayurveda uses diet, herbs, water therapy,

massage, attitude training, detoxification procedures, and other procedures to encourage restoration of the body to a condition of balance. The *Charaka Samhita*, a famous Indian medical text, was preserved for generations by oral tradition before being written down. Using Sanskrit, practitioners of Ayurveda would memorize key phrases and in this way retain the knowledge of their science, as well as pass it on to qualified successors. First put into writing in the first century A.D., the *Charaka Samhita* lists over five hundred herbs and their medicinal uses. Knowledge of Ayurvedic procedures passed from India to Mediterranean countries and finally to the West. During the many years of British rule, state patronage resulted in a decline of Ayurvedic practice in India and Western medicine became dominant. Now, however, there are once again several schools of Ayurveda in India, and scientific research is being used to prove the usefulness of many of the Ayurvedic procedures.

chakra — A distribution center in the body through which prana flows. The main chakras, or "wheels," are located as follows: crown chakra, upper brain; spiritual eye, between the eyebrows, and the positive pole of the *medulla oblongata*; cervical chakra, in the spinal path opposite the throat; dorsal chakra, between the shoulder blades; lumbar chakra, middle of the back; sacral chakra, small of the back; and coccygeal chakra, the lower extremity of the spinal column. Prana flows into the body through the medulla, to the brain, and then down the spinal pathway to nourish the body and direct internal processes. The spiritual eye center is used as a point of focus during yogic meditation.

consciousness — Consciousness is of two kinds. One, there is the consciousness (awareness) of something. Two, there is the entity of consciousness itself, knowing itself as such,

without any object or mirror for itself to be perceived in. The second kind is often referred to as pure consciousness. It is also the ground out of which all forms emerge.

God — The Supreme Being. The stable aspect of God is Pure Consciousness. When we think of God we usually conceptualize the Godhead, with attributes and capacities. Men have given the Godhead many names; so long as one turns to God, regardless of the name used, one is lifted Godward.

grace — The supportive influence pervading nature; the movement of life in the direction of orderly fulfillment of purposes. Since grace is innate to creation it is always available and can be experienced when one is sufficiently surrendered and responsive to it.

guru — Literally, the light that dispels darkness. The guru is considered to be God expressing in human form in order to assist disciples who seek liberation of consciousness. For a disciple to be successful in his efforts on the spiritual path he must please his guru; that is, he must abide by the guru's teachings. If the disciple resists the guru's teachings, if he is immature and self-willed, he is not open to higher instruction, nor to the possibility of transcending ego-consciousness. The guru's function is to show the disciple the way to freedom in God. For this to be possible, the disciple must be willing to rid himself of all that is contrary to Self-realization. Guruseva, service to the guru, is to be considered as service to God. By becoming attuned to the guru's consciousness the disciple experiences attunement to God. By understanding the true nature of the guru, the disciple understands the true nature of God.

inner transformation — Beneficial changes which occur as a result of self-discipline, learning through experience, and

the activity of superconscious influences (when these are expressive).

kundalini — Dormant static force resting in nature and in the body of man. When it awakens in nature, life forms begin on the planet. When it awakens in man, soul qualities begin to unfold. In the average person this force is mostly dormant and the person assumes himself to be a physical body. When kundalini awakens and begins to ascend the path of the chakras, then intellectual capacities are unveiled, intuition awakens, and creativity unfolds.

meditation — The easy process of relaxing the body and allowing the mental field to become clear. It has nothing in common with mental manipulation or hypnotic practices. Meditation is not a passive experience; it is a conscious, creative process. Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* remains the most reliable guidebook to meditation practice. His explanation is sometimes referred to as "eight-limbed," because eight stages are explained. These are: Yama, the restraints; Niyama, the observances; Asana, correct meditation posture; Pranayama, regulation of vital forces in the body; Pratyahara, inward turning; Dharana, concentration; Dhyana, contemplation; Samadhi, clear awareness, the peak experience.

mind — The organ of perception which receives information from the senses and processes it. The intellectual capacity of a person enables him to analyze mental contents and make determinations. A heavily conditioned mind restricts and clouds one's intelligence, suppresses intuition, and restricts thinking and behavior. One on the enlightenment path endeavors to be Self-determined, from the soul level, rather than to be influenced by compulsions caused by mental conditionings. For this reason one who is interested in liberation of consciousness should shun involvement

with hypnosis and other conditioning procedures. The mind we use is really a portion of omnipresent cosmic mind, which is why we can, through visualization, cause effects in our environment. The mind, used with intelligence, is a creative tool. Used unwisely, it can be the means to further bondage.

prana — A Sanskrit word meaning "life force." Prana pervades all of nature and enlivens it. It pervades the body and enlivens all of the systems of the body. When life force is harmonized in the body as the result of deep relaxation, emotional peace and mental calm prevail, allowing concentration and easy meditation to be experienced. Pranayama is simply the regulation of life force in the body, usually through the practice of certain simple breathing exercises. Pranayama occurs naturally when attention is internalized during meditation.

samadhi — A Sanskrit word used to refer to the superconscious state which is experienced when thought streams subside. Initial samadhi states afford proof of the effectiveness of meditation. Deeper and more prolonged samadhi states contribute to inner transformation and Self-realization.

siddhis — Powers of perfection, the capacities and abilities which unfold when inner restrictions are removed. The third section of the *Yoga Sutras* expounds in considerable detail on the subject of siddhis. Some of these abilities are: the power to be as small as an atom, to be as large as the universe, to be weightless, to see at a distance with remote vision, to do anything that is intended, and to be invincible.

soul — The specialized unit of Spirit identified with mind and body. It is correct to assert, "I am a soul, using a mind

and body." Errors in perception, leading to misunderstanding, cause a person to believe, "I am a person, with a soul."

spiritual eye — The "third eye," or "eye of intuition," where attention is focused, between the eyebrows, during meditation. The light of the spiritual eye, seen during deep meditation, is reflected light from the *medulla oblongata* through which soul force infiltrates the body. Soul force, flowing into the body, causes the soul to feel itself to be the body. When attention is reversed during meditation, and life forces converge at the medulla, inner light is seen.

stress reduction — The process which occurs when one meditates correctly, or engages in any procedure designed to assist in relaxing the body and calming the mind and emotions. An accumulation of stress interferes with normal function, often resulting in psychological problems and physical illness. Meditation, correctly and regularly practiced, is a proven way to reduce stress.

Yoga — To "yoke" or bring together (harmonize) all of the aspects of body, mind and personality so that Self-realization can be experienced. Various yogic systems include Hatha Yoga, or "sun-moon" yoga, which involves body postures (asanas), mudras (life force control procedures) and pranayama; Bhakti Yoga, the way of love and devotion; Karma Yoga, the way of selfless service; Jnana Yoga, the way of intellectual discernment; and Raja Yoga, the way of meditation and contemplation. The basic text on Raja Yoga is the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.* Laya Yoga (use of sound), Kundalini Yoga (to awaken and work with the primal force in the body) and Kriya Yoga are a matter of emphasis, only.

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